Commentary

Volume Sixty-six, Number Six, December 1978

KENNEDYISM AGAIN

Midge Decter

FOREIGN AID FOR WHAT?

P.T. Bauer and John O'Sullivan

THE SOVIET JEW AS INTELLECTUAL

Simon Markish

NEW YORK'S CRISIS—AND WASHINGTON'S

Roger Starr

THE STRANGE UNHAPPY LIFE OF MAX PERKINS

Kenneth S. Lynn

PLURALISM ANCIENT AND MODERN

Milton Himmelfarb

GOOD-BAD AND BAD-BAD

Pearl K. Bell

BOOKS IN REVIEW:

David Herbert Donald / Herman Belz / Barry Rubin / James Q. Wilson / Harold Bloom / Lucy S. Dawidowicz

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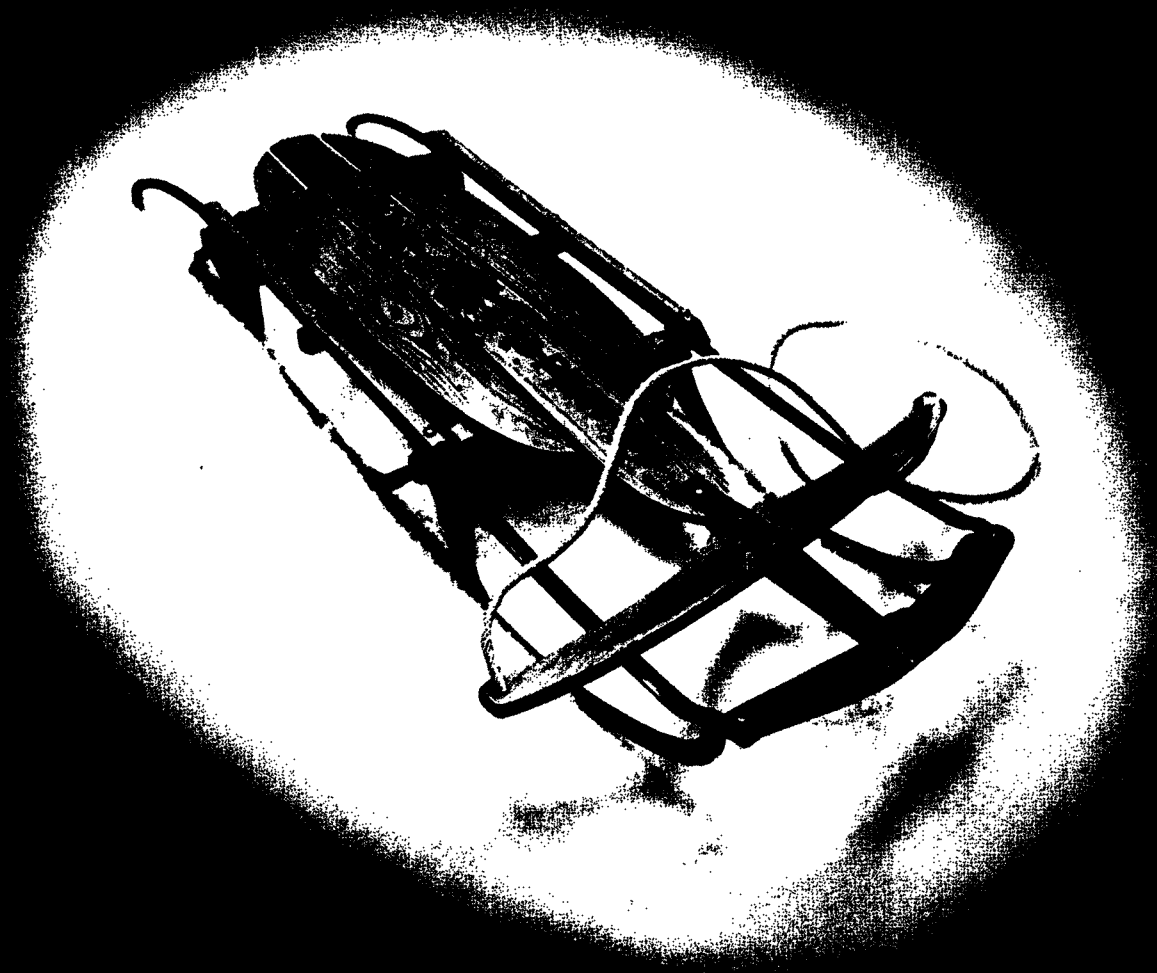

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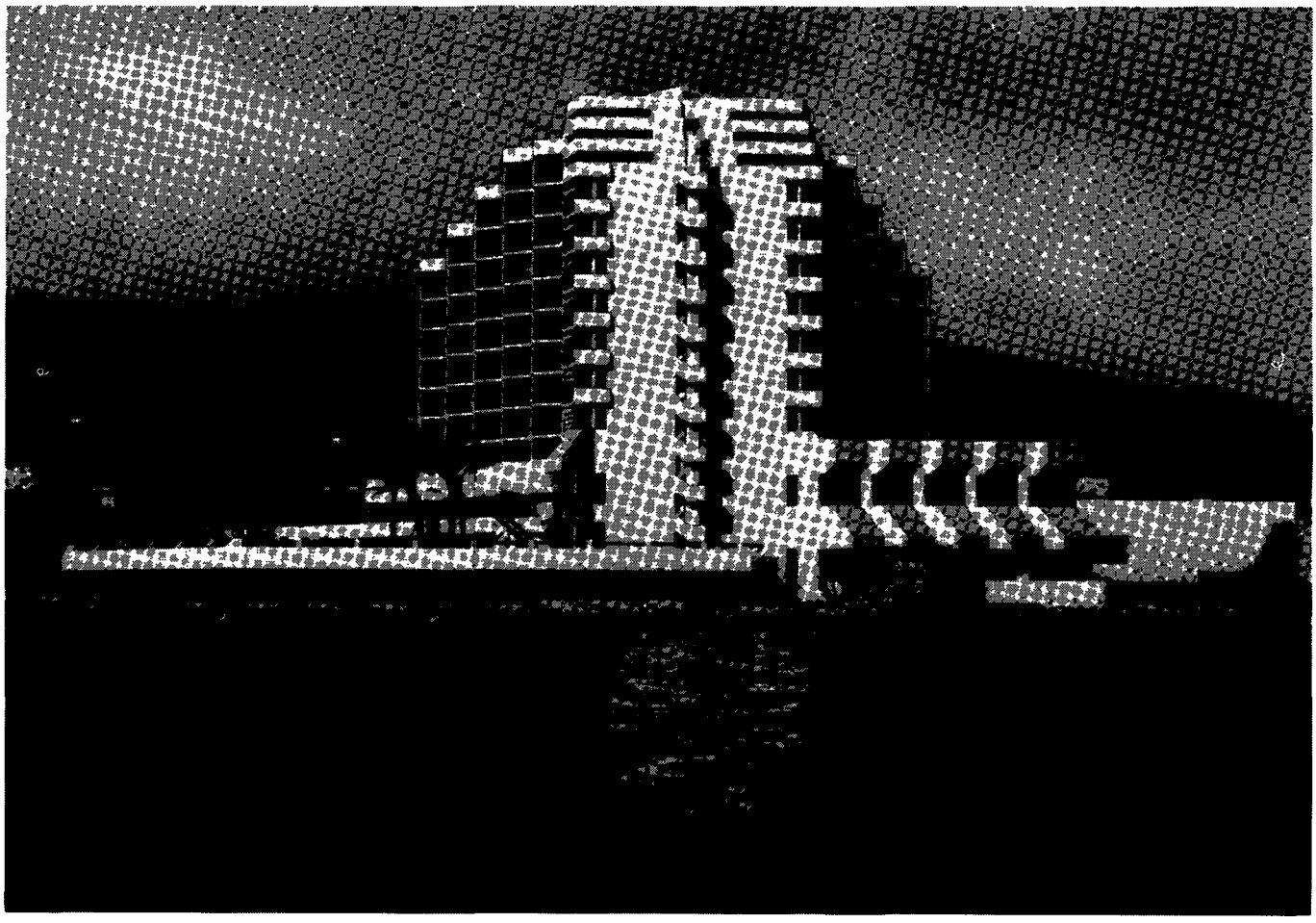

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Commentary

VOLUME 66 NUMBER 6 *DECEMBER 1978*

Articles	23	Kennedyism Again *Midge Decter*
	30	Passers-by: The Soviet Jew as Intellectual *Simon Markish*
	41	Foreign Aid for What? *P.T. Bauer and John O'Sullivan*
	49	New York's Crisis—and Washington's *Roger Starr*
	58	The Strange Unhappy Life of Max Perkins *Kenneth S. Lynn*
In the Community	64	Pluralism Ancient and Modern *Milton Himmelfarb*
Fiction	70	Good-Bad and Bad-Bad *Pearl K. Bell*
Letters	4	from *Henry Rosovsky, Jonathan K. Baum, Jacob E. Heller, William J. Bennett, Terry Eastland, Gedalyah Engel, Nathan Glazer, Philip Hochstein, Ruth R. Wisse, Donald Phelps, B. H. Haggin, Curtis Cate, Tom Shuford, Lev Navrozov,* and others
Books in Review	74	A Distant Mirror, by Barbara W. Tuchman *David Herbert Donald*
	77	James T. Farrell: The Revolutionary Socialist Years, by Alan M. Wald *Herman Belz*
	80	In Search of Identity, by Anwar al-Sadat *Barry Rubin*
	82	Political Control of the Economy, by Edward R. Tufte *James Q. Wilson*
	85	Nietzsche, Henry James, and the Artistic Will, by Stephen Donadio *Harold Bloom*
	86	Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism, by George L. Mosse *Lucy S. Dawidowicz*

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Letters from Readers

"Gen Ed" at Harvard

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is quite difficult to respond to Kenneth S. Lynn's critique of Harvard's newly adopted core-curriculum requirement ["Son of 'Gen Ed,'" September]. His article is so filled with faulty history and self-contradictory criticism that one can scarcely tell what he thinks is a vice and what a virtue. The heart of his position seems to be that whatever comes from Harvard must—*a priori*—be deeply flawed.

Mr. Lynn claims that the core curriculum is so derivative from the earlier program that it should be called "Son of 'Gen Ed'" and says that Harvard was unwilling to "try something new and different." Yet he also argues that core courses in Contexts of Culture and Social and Philosophical Analysis would be so new and innovative that the faculty will be unable to teach them.

He castigates Harvard for having "once again rejected the idea of a prescribed curriculum." Yet he describes the requirement that students demonstrate competence in basic mathematics (through course work or examination) as "an intolerable imposition."

Mr. Lynn concludes, rather oddly, that the faculty "emptied its discussions of intellectual content," and "would not accept the challenge of cooperatively designing a curriculum," because it wished "to deal with the question of what an educated man or woman ought to know" before determining "details of course content and organization."

It is also clear to Mr. Lynn that Harvard's efforts were doomed at the start because deliberations were not confined to a group that was sufficiently "small" or "intimate"; better yet, "a whole new conception of collegiate education" should have been personally defined by the president or the dean, and imposed on the faculty who would have to teach it, in "the grand manner" of Robert Hutchins. This is a most curious position for Mr. Lynn to take. One of his models for the undergraduate curriculum is that of Columbia; yet Columbia's General Education program evolved over the period from 1919 to 1954, and was shaped by broad faculty participation, rather than Olympian decrees. No substantial attempt was made to define an overall philosophy for the program until 1946 (after the publication of Harvard's Redbook), and the plan outlined then was not fully implemented. Mr. Lynn's hero is Robert Hutchins, who did indeed "propose a whole new conception of collegiate education"; yet this is a curious basis on which to criticize Harvard's *procedures*, especially since Hutchins's basic ideas were never successfully installed at Chicago (they were much more fully applied to the curriculum of tiny St. John's, where they still thrive).

In these and countless other respects, Mr. Lynn's arguments are so slipshod and circular as not to warrant extended discussion. But I am compelled to correct two particularly gross misrepresentations. Mr. Lynn quotes an open letter that I addressed to my colleagues at Harvard in 1974 tracing "the stupendous transformation of postwar Harvard." But he fails to indicate the context of my argument, namely, that this transformation was largely the result of long-term intellectual, social, and institutional trends which affected all of higher education, not merely Harvard. The need to clarify goals in undergraduate education is scarcely unique to Harvard.

Mr. Lynn characterizes the Harvard faculty as a group that sees "no compelling reason not to let professors stage their own shows as usual." But if this is indeed the case, then why would the Harvard faculty have voted for a new core curriculum that will require a substantial redirection of its energies into undergraduate education? Mr. Lynn himself admits that the reforms were not imposed from above. He may not find the new program congenial or credible, but that is quite beside the point; the question is, why should the Harvard faculty even undertake it?

Mr. Lynn's explanation is that the core curriculum "is a triumph of an enormous nostalgia" for "the old dream of liberal-arts teaching." He also asserts that for American faculties generally, "the do-your-own-thing anarchy of the 1960's

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left us exhausted and a little frightened." As to exhaustion and fright, Mr. Lynn must speak for himself. As to nostalgia, Mr. Lynn himself yearns most passionately for the General Education plan begun at Columbia in 1919, or the ideals enunciated by Hutchins in 1936. What he seemingly cannot understand is that the current inadequacies of General Education at Harvard and elsewhere reflect a broader and deeper range of historical changes than his simplistic criticisms suggest. Neither the core curriculum nor the dissatisfaction from which it springs is, as Mr. Lynn implies, a "backlash against permissiveness." Ideals of the educated man, and the character of General Education, inevitably alter over time as the scope of knowledge and social values change. Historians may stand still, but history does not. What is happening in many American colleges and universities today is a stock-taking, a difficult, voluntary, and wholly commendable effort to clarify and reformulate the relationship between liberal education and the contemporary world.

HENRY ROSOVSKY
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As the former leader of a student effort to get the Harvard faculty to honor more fully its commitment to undergraduate education, I feel compelled to correct some misinformation on the subject conveyed by Kenneth S. Lynn in his otherwise highly commendable article, "Son of 'Gen Ed.'" While Mr. Lynn's analysis of the difficulties inherent in reforming Harvard's General Education program is excellent, I regret that he paints far too rosy a picture of the response of the Harvard faculty—and, in particular, of its dean, Henry Rosovsky—to recent undergraduate demands that professors cease consigning so much of the "burden" of teaching them to graduate teaching assistants.

Mr. Lynn calls attention to the Harvard faculty's neglect in recent years of its responsibility—mandated by 1961 faculty legislation—to do at least 70 per cent of the tutoring of undergraduates in their fields of concentration. Mr. Lynn is quite correct in pointing up the faculty's neglect of its responsibility. He is incorrect, however, in ascribing the effort to rectify this situation to Mr. Rosovsky. In truth, it was undergraduate members of Harvard's Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) and Educational Resources Group (ERG) who publicized the fact that, in at least two of the university's largest fields of concentration (economics and government), more than 90 per cent of the tutoring was being done by graduate students. It was these undergraduates who unearthed the faculty's dust-laden standards for professorial participation in the tutorial program and who moved to have those standards acknowledged and enforced. In point of fact, these student efforts were actively *resisted* by the Harvard administration, led by Mr. Rosovsky.

While Mr. Rosovsky personally denounced student moves to have the university enforce its own faculty-participation quotas as a "meat-ax approach," the task force he organized to improve the performance of the fields of concentration recommended not only that the 1961 standards not be enforced but that the whole body of tutorial rules be scrapped altogether. It was only a vigorous lobbying campaign by students, aided by a small contingent of sympathetic faculty—a campaign featuring the laborious compilation and analysis of the actual teaching load of every faculty member in each of the university's five largest departments—which forced Mr. Rosovsky and the Faculty Council to . . . order a "review" of tutorial practices.

Perhaps Mr. Lynn was simply misled by the spokesmen for the Harvard administration. I frankly suspect this is the case. My clue is Mr. Lynn's crediting Mr. Rosovsky with a desire to raise Harvard undergraduate education to the level advertised in "the literature distributed to prospective Harvard undergraduates." My experience with the dean was somewhat different. When I pointed out to him the disparity between the faculty contact promised in the Harvard brochure and the reality of junior and senior tutorials taught by graduate students, he suggested not that we work to change the reality, but that we instead rewrite the brochure.

JONATHAN K. BAUM
Evanston, Illinois

KENNETH S. LYNN WRITES:

Henry Rosovsky has indeed experienced difficulty in responding to my article. His silence on some of the most important arguments I made suggests acute embarrassment. His distortion of other arguments, deliberate resort to misquotation, and ascription to me of attitudes I patently do not hold are further indications that he cannot really face honest criticism.

Mr. Rosovsky begins his rejoinder by insinuating that I don't like anything about Harvard. He should have known better from my article, if from nothing else. In the article I saluted Charles William Eliot as the "most impressive" university president of the 19th century. I referred to the "memorable" General Education courses of I.A. Richards, Perry Miller, and other Harvard "luminaries." I declared that the "Gen Ed" courses of such "charismatic" lecturers as Samuel Beer provided Harvard undergraduates of the post-World War II decades with "the same sort of grand perspective that had once been supplied by the legendary History 1." If my article was critical of Harvard, it also paid respect. Does Mr. Rosovsky treat me with a similar fair-mindedness?

The answer to that question becomes clearer in his second paragraph, in which he accuses me of inconsistency. On the one hand, says Mr. Rosovsky, I ask why the Harvard faculty doesn't try something new and different, while on the other hand I say that core courses in Contexts of Culture and Social and Philosophical Analysis will be so innovative that the faculty will be unable to teach them. Let us look more closely at this matter. In my discussion of the faculty's announced intention to offer interdisciplinary courses in Contexts of Culture, I pointed out that more than seventy years ago the interdisciplinary major called History and Literature was introduced at Harvard. During the 1930's and 1940's, that program may very well have been the best in the college, but in more recent years it has deteriorated badly. According to an eminent professor who is still connected with it, History and Literature is "a terrible mess." His testimony and corroborating evidence from other sources led me to ask: "If humanities professors at Harvard are really interested in interdisciplinary teaching, why have they not shown it by maintaining the esprit of a program already in

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being?" In other words, I doubt that the humanities professors now teaching at Harvard can deliver the goods. It is much more likely that Contexts of Culture will turn out to be a familiar set of single-discipline courses with a fancy new name. The fusing of the study of history and literature does not represent an educational innovation at Harvard. It represents, rather, an exhausted tradition, to which the present faculty pays lip-service. With regard to the requirement in Social and Philosophical Analysis, which seems in part to have been inspired by post-Watergate morality, I welcome innovativeness but fear trendiness. Some of the gut courses offered in the "Gen Ed" program certainly illustrate the dangers of teaching fashionable subjects.

In the third paragraph of Mr. Rosovsky's letter I am again charged with inconsistency. Allegedly, my article castigated Harvard for not adopting a prescribed curriculum, at the same time that it deplored the math competency regulation. In making this charge, Mr. Rosovsky has yoked together two utterly dissimilar concepts. A prescribed curriculum would introduce all freshmen to areas of knowledge previously unexplored by them and would provide them with a common intellectual experience. A math competency test will force those freshmen who do not pass it to take a remedial, high-school-level course in pre-calculus math. I deplored the requirement as a Band-Aid answer to the continuing decline of standards in the American high school. If even rigorously selected Harvard freshmen cannot pass a test in basic mathematics, then it is time for college deans and presidents to rethink the entire relationship between high school and college, as Robert Hutchins once did. The fact that Mr. Rosovsky does not seem to understand this suggests that he is not really an educator, in the grand sense of the term.

As for Mr. Rosovsky's allegation that my article castigated Harvard for having failed to adopt a prescribed curriculum, he has simply misread me. The point I was making was that the Harvard faculty's unwillingness, first in 1949 and now again in 1978, to adopt such a curriculum is one of several significant signs of how fainthearted the faculty's commitment to the ideal of General Education really is. In the absence of the sort of pedagogical dedication that made "Gen Ed" at Columbia and Chicago a success, the core curriculum will fail, just as "Gen Ed" did before it. To say this is not to castigate, but to state a fact.

Mr. Rosovsky's worst moment comes in his fourth paragraph. He makes the quotations from my article refer to the faculty, whereas they in fact refer to the core-curriculum committee of the faculty. He also quotes me as saying something I never said. The words he falsely ascribes to me—"details of course content and organization"—were actually those of the committee. Not only are these words not mine, but they bear not the slightest relation to the reasons cited in my article for the committee's refusal to accept Mr. Rosovsky's invitation to design a new set of courses. What my article actually said is that the committee could not have designed a curriculum because it "was not bound together by a unity of interest and intention that would have permitted such an undertaking." Having ruled intellectual content out of its discussions, the committee proceeded to "deal with the question of what an educated young man or woman ought to know *in terms of abstract rules*." I have emphasized those last five words because Mr. Rosovsky slickly leaves them out in the course of quoting me. Just as he puts some words into my mouth, so does he take out others—and all for the purpose of creating a totally erroneous impression of what I said.

In the light of these cute tricks, I am wryly amused by his complaint in paragraph six about "gross misrepresentations." In 1974, Mr. Rosovsky wrote a letter to his colleagues about the "inadequacies" of the undergraduate program at Harvard. Although Mr. Rosovsky is proud of this letter, he is dismayed that it has now been tied to a critique of the core curriculum. In an effort to minimize his embarrassment, he says that I did not summarize him accurately by failing to indicate that Harvard's problems are not unique. While I understand his feelings, I reject his accusation. The prologue to Mr. Rosovsky's letter to his colleagues states: "In the pages that follow, I have attempted to set down my understanding of the broad problems and specific issues peculiar—though not exclusive—to undergraduate education at Harvard." In the ensuing eighteen pages of text, the focus is on Harvard's problems, which is what one would expect in an in-house memorandum. The summary of Mr. Rosovsky's letter presented in my article is faithful to his emphasis. I am, however, more than happy to join with him here in declaring that problems similar to Harvard's are widespread in the academic world.

The second of the two "gross misrepresentations" of which I am supposedly guilty has to do with my characterization of the Harvard faculty as a group that sees "no compelling reason not to let professors stage their own shows as usual." Alas, the quotation has been removed from its context. In 1949, the authors of *General Education in a Free Society* proposed to their Harvard colleagues that the university set up a prescribed undergraduate curriculum in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The faculty voted down this proposal, thereby destroying the "Gen Ed" rationale of a shared intellectual experience for the students. Unlike the faculties at Columbia and Chicago, the Harvard faculty refused to join together in a common enterprise. It preferred to stage its own individual courses. I see nothing in my characterization to warrant Mr. Rosovsky's charge of misrepresentation.

Mr. Rosovsky is curiously silent about two of my most severe criticisms of the core curriculum. The first is based on the fact that the foreign-language requirement in the core can be easily avoided. Consequently, I said, "Foreign Languages and Cultures is an inflated public-relations title that does not really mean what it implies." The second criticism is that in recommending that a required course in expository English be established, the core committee lacked the courage to mention that the only expository writing courses which have succeeded in American colleges and universities since World War II have been absolutely dependent upon the intense involvement of full professors. Does Mr. Rosovsky's failure to speak to these points imply secret acknowledgment of their cogency?

The questions about Mr. Rosovsky that are raised by his letter about my article are heightened by

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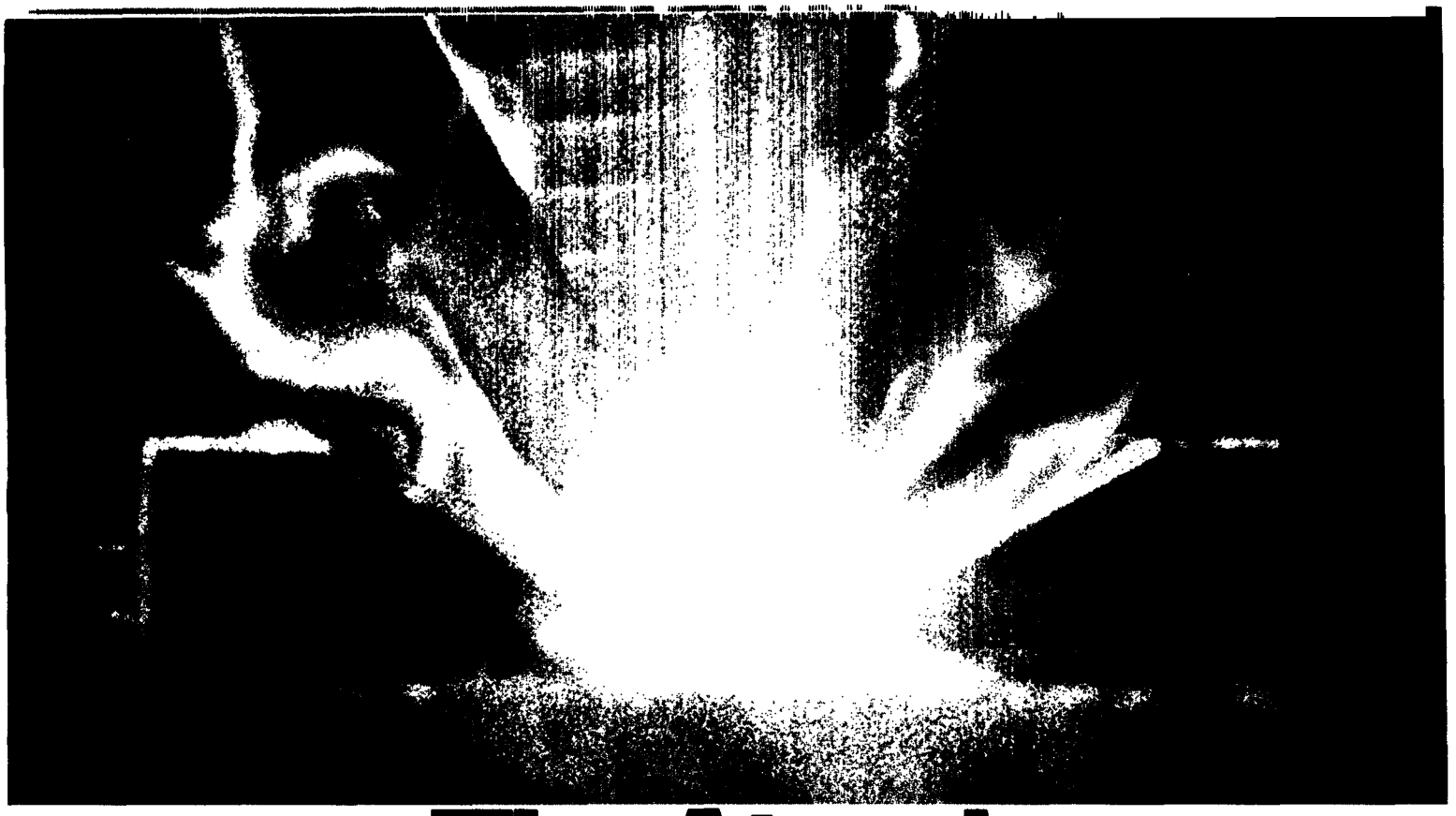

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the comments of Jonathan K. Baum. As a result of reading Mr. Baum, I now realize that I may have been misled by Mr. Rosovsky into believing that he sincerely desired to raise undergraduate tutorial to the level advertised in official Harvard brochures. In fact, Mr. Rosovsky may have been much more of an enemy of the tutorial system than its friend.

The Bakke Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William J. Bennett and Terry Eastland ["Why Bakke Won't End Reverse Discrimination: 1," September] are correct in saying that Justices Blackmun, Brennan, Marshall, and White, in their dissenting opinion in the *Bakke* case, voted to declare the special-admissions program at Davis legal under the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. But is there any warrant for their contention that the dissenting Justices held that the Fourteenth Amendment "permits race to be the *decisive* consideration in a university admissions program"?

It is true that the dissenting opinion stated: "The Supreme Court affirms the constitutional power of federal and state governments to act affirmatively to achieve equal opportunity for all." But these words do not support the Bennett-Eastland view: "equal opportunity for all" negates "decisive consideration" for race.

Perhaps Messrs. Bennett and Eastland rely upon the following, taken from the dissenting opinion: "Government may take race into account when it acts not to demean or insult any racial group, but to remedy disadvantages cast on minorities by past racial prejudice, at least when appropriate findings have been made by judicial, legislative, or administrative bodies with competence to act in this area."

But, once again, nothing in the dissenting opinion says that consideration of race must be decisive. The words "take race into account" are as vague as are the words "some consideration of race" in the majority opinion. . . .

Messrs. Bennett and Eastland also fail to emphasize that the opinion is a dissenting opinion and is thus not the judgment of the Supreme Court. . . .

I suggest that it would have been appropriate for Messrs. Bennett and Eastland to have stated that the Supreme Court to date has *not* adjudged that "past racial prejudice" or "the remediation of disadvantages cast on minorities" is sufficient warrant for affirmative action, especially where such affirmative action results in reverse discrimination.

To my knowledge, affirmative action has been upheld, to date, by the Supreme Court only to redress proven discrimination to specific petitioners (not to redress generalized past discrimination to their race or ethnic group) at the hands of their employer or prospective employer. . . .

JACOB E. HELLER
New York City

WILLIAM J. BENNETT and TERRY EASTLAND write:

Jacob E. Heller points out that nothing in the dissenting opinions of the Court in the *Bakke* case says that consideration of race must be decisive in university admissions. Indeed, Mr. Heller might have added that nothing in Justice Powell's opinion says so either. But one cannot conclude from this that the Court has not ratified "decisive consideration of race." In pointing to Harvard, as Justice Powell does, or in pointing to Davis, as the four dissenters do, five members of the Court have said that it is all right to make race count, and count decisively. It is no consolation, and it makes no difference in the real world, that the Court did not order but only "approved" decisive consideration of race.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nathan Glazer's conclusions ["Why Bakke Won't End Reverse Discrimination: 2," September] are startling. He suggests that we give consideration to race and ethnicity, but advocates that we do so on a voluntary basis rather than by government decree. . . . But, in the final analysis, racism, whether advocated by the government or by individuals, undermines a democratic society. . . .

In a democratic society, our concern should be to help the individual develop his potential to the fullest. Those in the lowest socioeconomic category deserve our special attention, no matter what their race or ethnic origin. Considerable time, effort, and funds have to be expended to enable individuals to rise above their poor background. . . .

Until such time as the system does provide more educational opportunities for the disadvantaged, admissions officers will have to give some consideration to differences in socioeconomic background. But not to the point where the applicant might himself be hurt. For example, the percentile scores on the Medical College Admissions Test which Mr. Glazer cites clearly show how poorly the "special admittees" to the Davis Medical School performed compared to the "regular admittees." What happens to those who are admitted this way once they are in medical school? . . . "Benign Nuremberg laws" are a victory for racists, but "voluntarily"-accepted quotas based on race and ethnicity would prove equally harmful. In a democracy, concern should be for the individual.

[RABBI] GEDALYAH ENGEL
B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana

NATHAN GLAZER writes:

Rabbi Engel correctly grasps the direction in which I was moving in my article. I did make a distinction between government *imposing* quotas by law and regulation (and here I would include government imposing goals and timetables, which—on this I agree with Sidney Hook—are not really distinguishable from quotas) and autonomous institutions *voluntarily* deciding to take into account to some degree the race and ethnic background of applicants in order to increase the proportions from some groups. Justice Powell justified this on the narrow ground that academic freedom permitted a choice of greater diversity in a student body. I would justify it on broader grounds: it is understandable that institutions of higher education might want to reach out to groups who have suffered discrimination and who, for this or other reasons, do not show up in substantial numbers among applicants, on grounds of making up for discrimination in the past, serving special populations, or for other reasons.

While I make a sharp distinction between government action and the voluntary actions of autonomous institutions, I know that constitutionally such a distinction becomes

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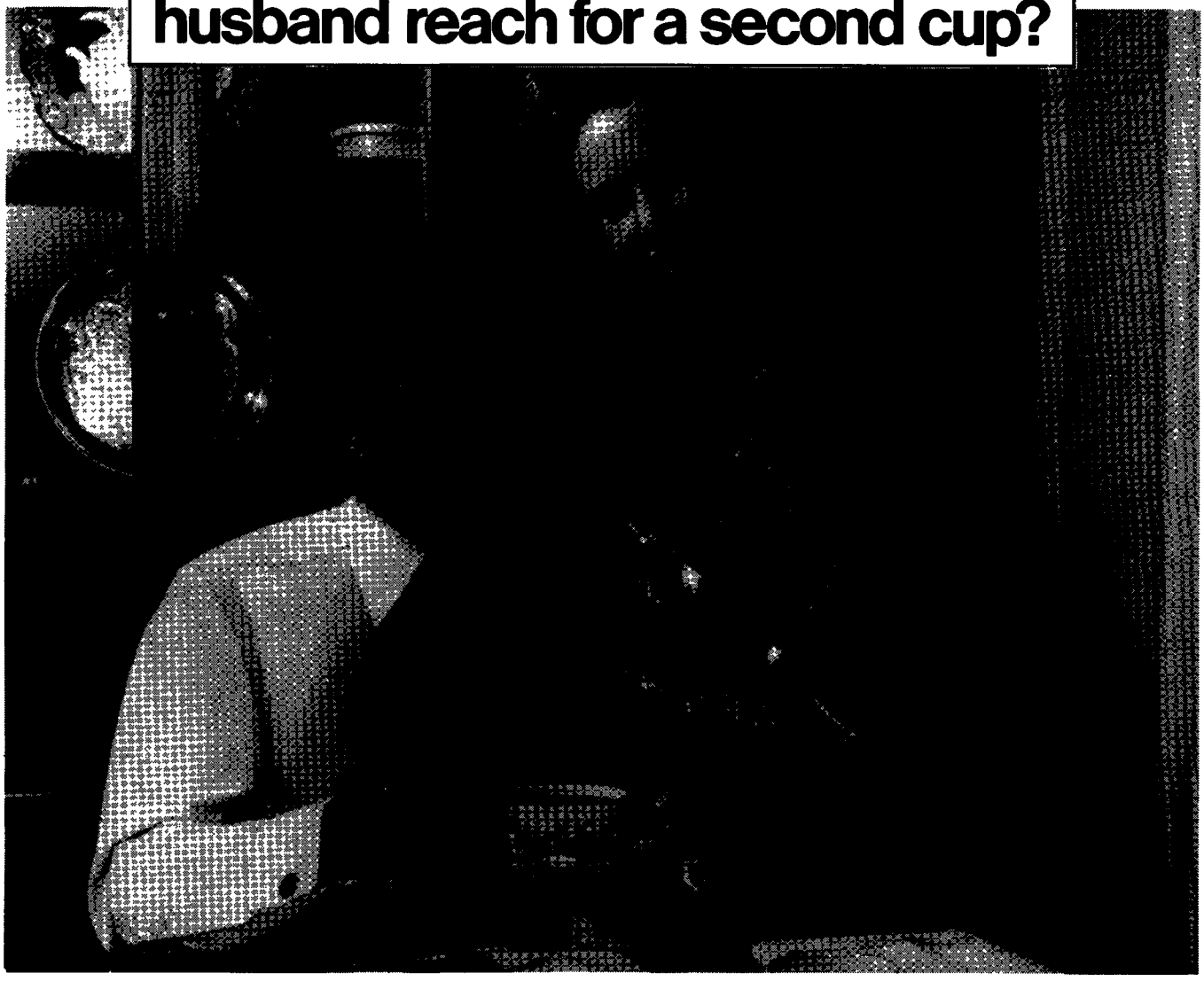

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harder and harder and harder to maintain, for as government reaches so deeply into every part of our life, everything can be seen simply as "government action." I would like to see the distinction maintained and defended, so that while government could not act on grounds of race, religion, or ethnic background, voluntary and autonomous institutions might. Even in this case, I think we would want safeguards against rigid quotas. To draw the line between making race "the" factor and taking race into account as "a" factor will be difficult, but the kind of data on medical scores from Davis given in my article could well serve as proof that race was used as a criterion overriding all others.

Finally, there is a grimly practical reason for my position. The Supreme Court, if it moves from the narrow ground of the Powell compromise, is more likely to accept quotas as constitutional, outlandish as that position might appear to us, than to ban the use of race everywhere. We should therefore try to live with the admittedly obscure situation that is created when some account of race to benefit individuals from groups with histories of discrimination or low achievement is allowed as constitutional.

The Jewish Week

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse ["The Anxious American Jew," September] deplores the probability that the *Jewish Week* is "unlikely to wean its readers from their dependency on the New York *Times*. . . ." She attributes this predicted failure in part to "the limitations of its [the *Jewish Week*'s] own perspective." We are not as saddened as she by her prediction, since we did not set out to serve as a substitute for the *Times*. We simply want to help them keep honest. As for our "perspective," it is sharpened but not limited by the fact that we consider it a major purpose to combat bias in the press against Israel.

PHILIP HOCHSTEIN
Jewish Week
New York City

RUTH R. WISSE writes:

I'm sorry if I take the *Jewish Week* more seriously than it takes itself. Any weekly that regularly boasts of being "First in Our Field" and of reaching more homes than any other English-language Jewish newspaper in the world ought to strive for more than keeping others honest and combating their biases. If the *Jewish Week* has campaigned against buying the *Times*, against the reporting of the *Times*, and against the editorial policy of the *Times*, without pointing to any available alternative, one may reasonably conclude that at least on Jewish matters it has wished to provide such an alternative itself. And if it lacks even *that* ambition, its perspective is more limited than I feared.

Dance Criticism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The operative phrase in B.H. Haggin's review of Arlene Croce's *Afterimages* [Books in Review, August] . . . is "expressive precision." This phrase encapsulates the differences between the two critics, as registered in Miss Croce's comment on an unnamed (by Mr. Haggin) critic, as paraphrased by Mr. Haggin: " . . . it works for someone who sees what that critic sees, but not for someone who doesn't see it," and Mr. Haggin's response to the comment. According to Mr. Haggin, "the fact is precisely that the critic reports not *the* truth about a work of art, but the truth for *him*, which becomes true for those others who find it confirmed by their experience of the work."

[But] . . . Arlene Croce is . . . no more concerned with *"the"* truth about a work of art . . . than is anyone past the undergraduate level of, say, 1923. Miss Croce's explicit concern, manifest . . . throughout both her dance and earlier film critiques, is with the critic's obligation to *express* . . . the actuality which he or she sees and hears; yes, perhaps one might say "*the* truth," indeed, as it impinges on the critic; the obligation, prior even to the critic's judgment on it, to transmit the event with what Nabokov once called "the precision of the artist, and the passion of the scientist"; with that reverence for the concrete experience and the world in which it occurs, its total context. And, if the critic succeeds, this act of identification elucidates a scale of relationships, and a corresponding structure of perspectives, which may actually enlarge, illuminate, others' "experience of the work," by elucidating for them the processes being observed and considered. Prior to the (indispensable) magisterial decisions, the sheep-goat divisions involved, criticism . . . is an endless assessing of locations, of which the central, ultimate location is the critic's; relative to the universe of whatever artwork is being appraised, and . . . relative to the world at large. Criticism is the critic's self-testing against the world, and, through expressive precision, defining himself or herself, albeit indirectly, even as every creative artist does. All this is attested for me by the work of Conrad Aiken, Guy Davenport, George Bernard Shaw, Manny Farber, James Agee, Stark Young, Eric Bentley, and . . . Arlene Croce. . . . The vitality of her critical writing, on movies no less than on the dance, abides in her fluid and precise sustaining for the reader, not merely a succession of isolate works, but the total context in which they occur, meaning the organic situation of every work, and performance, which she discusses. . . .

Mr. Haggin's "review" . . . is crowned by the grotesque assertion that Miss Croce, for all her "critic's perceptive eye" . . . is lacking in "personal" (whatever can *that* mean?) and "intellectual discipline." Mr. Haggin's dress parade of these virtues relies almost totally on examples of opinions expressed by Miss Croce with which Mr. Haggin differs; at times, to be sure, in degree only (as in the comment on Patricia McBride. . .). In the case of the comment on Suzanne Farrell's successors, which Mr. Haggin quotes, the difference lies plainly between Miss Croce's attempt to *formulate*, perceptively and imaginatively, the nature of the dancers' inadequacies; while Mr. Haggin settles for the flat, judgmental dictum that they *are* inadequate. . . .

Even a minimal attempt at analysis is lacking [in the review], as is any effort to locate these alleged errors and lapses in an overall pattern. . . . I find, indeed, a total indifference . . . to the critic, Arlene Croce, as a human being, possibly amenable to instruction and correction by a man many years her senior, and of appreciable reputation in his and her field. . . . The only detectable unifying tone throughout most of the piece is the sort of peevish hostility aroused in diehard

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royalists by an act or work of *lèse majesté*.

But whose majesty? The question . . . brings up Mr. Haggin's extensive comment, in the review's concluding section, on some remarks by Miss Croce, supposedly directed at Edward Villella's praise of Violette Verdy. I say "supposedly," because checking the original passage in *Afterimages* has confirmed for me what vagrant memory had hinted: both the brief opening and lengthy concluding comments were abstracted by Mr. Haggin from an extended critique by Arlene Croce—of B. H. Haggin. The remarks addressed to Villella's words are actually directed at Mr. Haggin's employment of those words. . . . I doubt that Mr. Haggin intended to *deceive* anyone. Rather, he assumes his pronouncements to be so inviolable, so much a premise of the universe, . . . that any attack on them as mere local opinions may be automatically discounted. . . .

DONALD PHELPS

New York City

B. H. HAGGIN WRITES:

Any reader, it seems to me, must note in Donald Phelps's letter Arlene Croce's being "no more concerned with '*the*' truth about a work of art . . . than is anyone past the undergraduate level of, say, 1923," and her "explicit concern," in the very next sentence, "with the critic's obligation to *express* . . . the actuality which he or she sees and hears; yes, perhaps one might say '*the* truth,' indeed, as it impinges on the critic"—must note, that is, this distinction without a difference. And as for the soaring prose of Mr. Phelps's further description of the critic's operation, the reader might prefer Balanchine's description of that operation in 1940, after I had written about ballet for the first time and expressed doubt whether I had any business writing about it without technical knowledge. "You look; you see; you write what you see," said Balanchine, "and that is good." He might also have said in 1923—when I had begun to write about music without any ideas on criticism acquired from the aesthetics courses I had not taken or books I had not read in my earlier undergraduate years —"You listen; you hear; you write what you hear; and that is good."

Moreover, any reader who rereads my review of Arlene Croce's book and then reads Mr. Phelps's letter can perceive that he misanswers his misreading and misstatement of what I wrote about her performance. There is, then, no need of my wasting time and COMMENTARY's space on a point-by-point demonstration of that fact. But since I did not, in my review, speak of Croce's criticism of me for quoting Villella, but discussed only her comments on the statement of his that I quoted, I must correct Mr. Phelps's erroneous assertion that her comments "supposedly" (in my review) "directed at Edward Villella's praise of Violette Verdy . . . are actually directed at Mr. Haggin's employment [i.e., quotation] of [Villella's] words." Mr. Phelps read Croce as inaccurately as he read me, failing to recognize that she did two different things, which were to criticize me for quoting Villella and to criticize the statements of his that I quoted; and that the words in which she criticized me were different from the words in which she criticized Villella's statements.

Her criticism of me was that I "resorted to extended quotations of other dancers' remarks about Violette Verdy to back up" my statements about her, instead of supporting my statements with my own analyses of the qualities and powers I attributed to her. This, like everything else in her extensive criticism of my comments on dancers, misstated what it referred to. That is, after concluding my report on the New York City Ballet in the Fall 1965 issue of the *Hudson Review*, I began a new paragraph with this explicit statement: "Wondering what the dancer's eye was aware of in Verdy's dancing, in addition to the elegance and style that enchanted the non-dancer's eye, I asked members of the company." And Villella, in the statements I quoted, did in fact speak only of some of the things he had perceived in Verdy's dancing that I had not perceived, and said nothing about what I had written. Croce's misrepresentation of my explicitly stated reason for quoting Villella revealed the same lack of intellectual discipline that I pointed out, in my review, in her manner of dealing with Villella's statements. And her allowing personal considerations to influence critical judgment in her absurdly effusive statement about McBride as "the shyest, most tenderly true, bravest, and least corruptible of classical dancers," and her disdainful "interesting, if you are interested in Verdy," revealed a lack of personal discipline.

The CIA & Russia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I cannot praise too highly Lev Navrozov's admirably researched and argued article, "What the CIA Knows About Russia" [September]. What he has written badly needed saying, and this article should be *must* reading for every member of Congress and every syndicated columnist and newspaper editorialist in this country.

In France, before World War II, fears expressed about the growing might of Hitler's Wehrmacht were habitually brushed aside with the reassuring remark that "the French army is the finest in the world." We all know what happened when that fatuous assertion was finally put to the test. Yet the same complacency is once again rampant among those, in Washington and elsewhere, who keep parroting that the United States is "the most powerful country in the world."

The blunt fact of the matter is that the United States is no longer the most powerful nation in the world since we have lost our former superiority in the three vital fields of nuclear weapons, strategic aviation, and naval vessels. Our ever-shrinking superiority is now limited to aircraft carriers, which are not of decisive military significance in land wars, as was demonstrated in Vietnam.

How many Americans know that the USSR maintains a dozen airborne divisions, almost as many ready-to-go divisions as there are in the U.S. army? How many Americans realize that the USSR has already developed a formidable fleet of transport planes capable of airlifting six full divisions, complete with tanks and artillery, over thousands of miles in less than seventy-two hours? The Soviet Union already produces more weapons and has a greater manpower-mobilization potential than the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, and France combined—even though the population of these countries is close to 400 million, compared to slightly more than 260 million inhabitants of the USSR. And this military disparity,

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instead of shrinking, is relentlessly increasing.

Mr. Navrozov's article is a somber warning that when nations lose the will to face the facts, they lose the will to survive.

CURTIS CATE

Paris, France

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lev Navrozov has demonstrated the failure of the U.S. intelligence community to obtain and interpret useful information on the Soviet Union. The CIA's retroactive doubling of estimates of Soviet defense spending for a recent fourteen-year period is perhaps the most alarming of the examples of misjudgment and incompetence he provides.

In two minor instances, however, I believe the examples Mr. Navrozov chooses lose impact as a result of his failure to clarify his evidence.

1. In presenting the CIA's and Senator Percy's exchange and conclusions about hunger in China, Mr. Navrozov does not supply Miriam and Ivan D. London's apparently very different conclusions. He implies that the Brooklyn College professors refute the CIA-Percy conclusions, but we cannot be sure since the Londons' findings are not clearly stated.

2. That the CIA could not determine whether riots took place in Kiev or Rostov may not prove its incompetence, since a "riot" has come to mean anything from a quickly-controlled outburst of a few people in a single spot (which the CIA might justifiably fail to detect) to a near revolution, as in Nicaragua. Mr. Navrozov should have been more specific about the "riot" the CIA did not discover.

TOM SHUFORD

Roslyn Heights, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his important article, Lev Navrozov has drawn attention to the sorry state of Western expertise on the USSR and to the problem of obtaining objective and accurate estimates of the Soviet Union. Until this article appeared, any discussion of the inadequacy of Western knowledge in this field was virtually taboo.

Surely only critical analysis can improve the situation, and such analysis is all the more necessary since the questions Mr. Navrozov raises are far from being merely ac-

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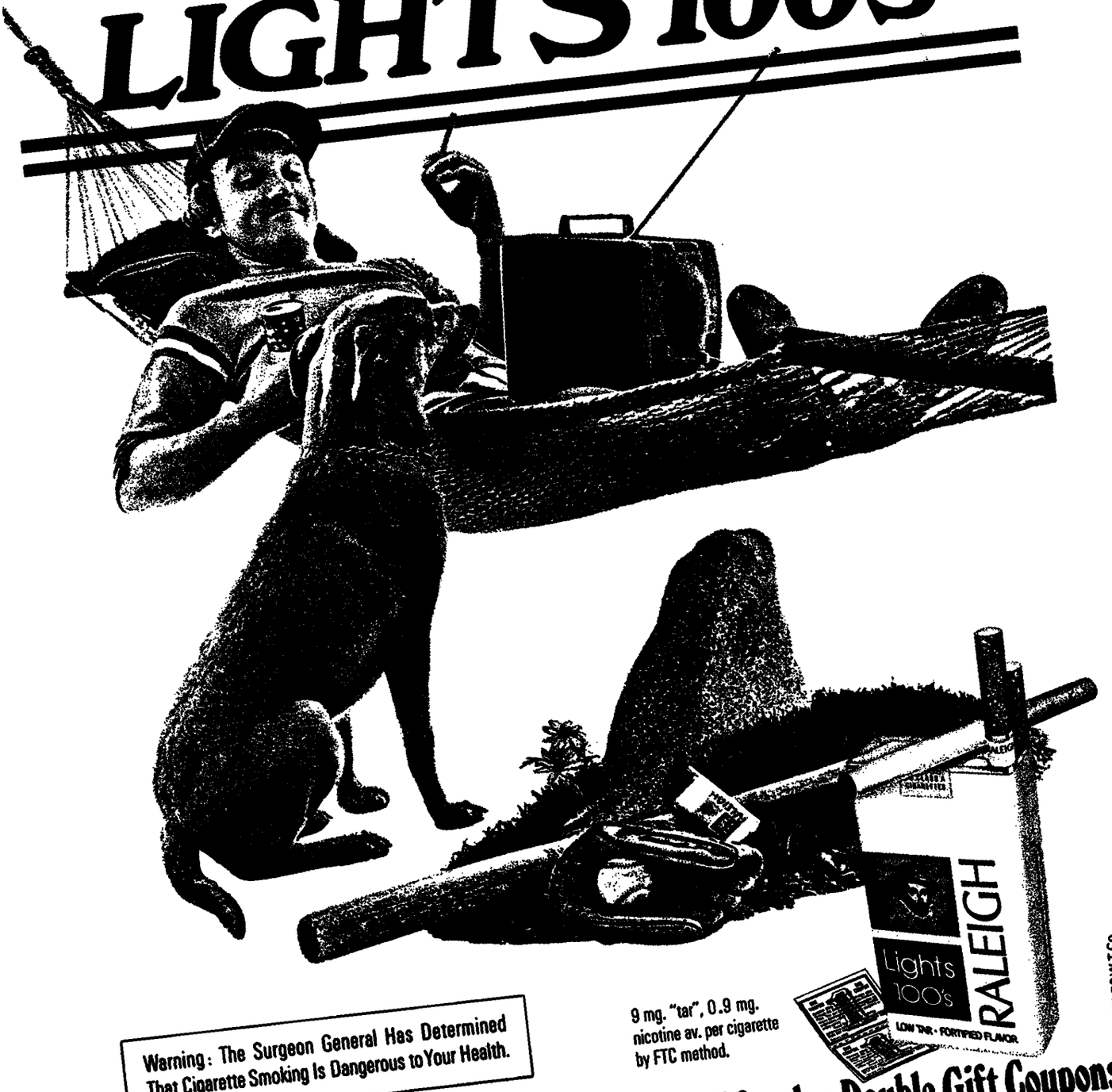

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ademic. The destiny of the United States and mankind critically depends on how these questions will be answered. . . .

One remark in conclusion. "Russia" is a multinational country in which the proportion of ethnic Russians has been decreasing; they now account for less than half the population. Therefore, to speak of the "Russians" is not only inaccurate geographically and politically, it also glosses over the multinational composition of the country and asserts the privileged position of ethnic Russians.

FRANTISHEK SILNITSKY
Elmhurst, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Without going into detail to dispute Lev Navrozov's investigative methods—which bear all the earmarks of the Soviet "scientific approach"—I would like to take exception to his sideswipes at a most erudite and respected scholar and writer on Soviet affairs: Harrison Salisbury.

If one were to place *The Education of Lev Navrozov* against Mr. Salisbury's many serious and thoroughly researched books, one could only conclude that Mr. Navrozov's education (through no fault of his own) has been deficient in that he has not made a closer study of Mr. Salisbury's works. . . .

MISHA ALLEN
Toronto, Canada

LEV NAVROZOV writes:

To Curtis Cate's *tour de force* I would add that the West needs sophisticated intelligence and expertise on the closed Soviet regime in any case, whether or not the latter is preparing world conquest. Free societies have to know about totalitarian regimes in order to spend their resources on defense and survival in the most effective way. Knowledge must precede any foreign policy, not to mention any arms agreement.

Tom Shuford is right. I ought to have mentioned at least the title of one of the articles by Miriam and Ivan D. London—for example, "The Other China: Hunger" (*Worldview*, No. 5, 1976). Similarly, I ought to have explained that in the Soviet regime not only a riot (any riot) but a strike, demonstration, or any group protest is a rare, extraordinary, much talked about, and long remembered event (even if seven persons participated in a demonstration and it was suppressed within a few minutes), since every participant in such group action is treated, *ipso facto*, as a criminal, usually to be deported. What makes the involvement really fearful, however, is that any kind of reprisal can be wrought on the "criminals," and no one knows in advance what the reprisals will be. By these standards, the Rostov and Kiev riots were practically social cataclysms. No wonder the reverberations reached Moscow and were reported by Moscow correspondents. But the CIA knew nothing about these events, though Kiev and Rostov are open to foreigners.

I am grateful to Frantishek Silnitsky for his statement about the critical importance of having adequate knowledge of closed societies. I also appreciate his attention to terminology. I myself never use the word "Russians" the way many Westerners, including President Carter, use it, to denote both Soviet rulers *and* the more than 100 nations of Russia they rule. Nor do I use Soviet "propaganda packages" like "Soviet Union" or "USSR" (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). Once Stalin was asked why he preferred such long names. He answered that each time a Westerner would refer to the object so named, he would have to repeat the whole propaganda package contained in the name. The word "Russia" does give undue prominence to ethnic Russians, especially in English where the two words have identical roots, but it is the lesser evil in this respect. It should be remembered that the full-fledged democracy which originated early in 1917 and was overthrown by Lenin's coup at the end of the year was called "Russia," with the implicit consent of all constituent nations.

Misha Allen does not really have to explain how highly respected, influential, and prolific Harrison Salisbury has been for at least thirty years as a "scholar and writer on Soviet affairs." That is precisely why I chose Mr. Salisbury in order to show, using two examples from his books on Russia, that even outside the CIA, a very great deal of highly respected Western expertise is, at this juncture, dangerous, owing to its naive ethnocentrism. Mr. Allen does not even try to disprove a single word of these two examples of mine concerning Harrison Salisbury.

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Kennedyism Again

Midge Decter

ONE of the favorite quadrennial pastimes of American journalists and political experts—namely, speculating about the presidential intention of Teddy Kennedy—seems already to have been preempted for 1980. No one of course can foresee all the possible developments within and without the Democratic party that might have bearing on the Senator's ultimate conduct, or what he might for this or that reason find it the better part of political valor to do. But there can no longer be any doubt that, given the least hope of a fair wind, he is set to sail. Not only is he in the time-honored way collecting chits for campaign services rendered from various people running for office this year; he is ostentatiously gesturing in the directions laid down by professional readers of public opinion. It is unmistakably a man sniffing the national Democratic party wind who within the space of a single week warmly endorses ERA, issues a call for prosecuting juvenile offenders as adults, presses his comprehensive national health-insurance plan, voices the view that too much government spending is a bad thing, and then a few days later while in the company of a number of labor leaders attacks the Carter tax cut as favoring the rich.

By far the most dramatic evidence of the forthcoming Kennedy candidacy, however, as well as the most interesting and curious, is the appearance of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s new biography of Bobby Kennedy.*

The book bears no immediate resemblance to one of those quickie campaign biographies. For one thing, it is extremely long; for another, it is not about the candidate and actually gives little account of him. Yet its massiveness is certainly not the result of a historian's long and careful gathering together of materials but, on the contrary, derives precisely from a failure of selectivity and modulation. Indeed, *Robert Kennedy and His Times* is in an odd way *unwritten*: more than a thousand pages devoted to someone whose career of notable public service included one term as Attorney General and one term as junior Senator from New York, in which every detail seems to be equal in weight to every other, and in which such documents as personal interviews, public papers, and the author's private diary are breezily commingled to serve as scholarly verification. I do not know when Schlesinger actually started on this project, but there is a kind of literary prolixity that is invariably the product of great haste, and this book reads very much like a prime example of it.

In addition to its air of being hurried, the book fairly throbs with its author's extra-historical purpose, which is quite blatantly to remind the American public of what it had once so briefly glimpsed in the way of brilliance and beauty and glamor, high hopes and high spirits, when the family and friends of John F. Kennedy (and subsequently Robert F. Kennedy) were in or very near the precincts of power in Washington. (This had also been Schlesinger's purpose in *A Thousand Days*, the story of John F. Kennedy's tenure in the White House, but as President of the United States at certain critical moments, the elder brother did provide a good deal more material of real historical substance.) As the baby Kennedy, Teddy does not figure in the book until he becomes a Senator and even then does not figure as much more than his brother Bobby's cicerone through the corridors of the Senate in 1965. Nevertheless, Schlesinger gives us clearly to understand that no matter how different from one another in character and temperament, when it comes to political stature and position, the Kennedys are interchangeable. Never may so formidable a mind and so accomplished a pen have produced so unsubtle an electioneering pamphlet.

MOREOVER, even if it were not actually by intention but only an unconscious maneuver, to have sent the ghost of Bobby out into the world at this moment to serve as a kind of spectral advance man for his brother's almost certain future campaign is a species of political wizardry. David Garth himself could have dreamed of no better. For, we must remind ourselves, on the face of it Teddy ought to be a seri-

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MIDGE DECTER, a long-time contributor to COMMENTARY, is the author of *Liberal Parents, Radical Children*, among other books. Her article, "Looting and Liberal Racism," appeared in our September 1977 issue.

* *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, Houghton Mifflin, 1066 pp., $19.95.

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ously disadvantaged candidate—someone at the mention of whose name eyebrows are raised and competitors chortle with glee. Despite the fact that a majority of people polled have thus far told the poll-takers that they prefer him to Carter, he is after all a man as vulnerable to the raking up of old scandals as anyone in American public life.

To be sure, we have come a long way from the day when Nelson Rockefeller's chance at the Presidency, widely considered to be unassailable in the late 50's, was destroyed overnight by the spectacle of an unpretty divorce and remarriage. Nowadays it appears to be the case that, providing he is properly contrite, for a man to get caught soliciting the sexual favors of an adolescent boy in exchange for money need be no hindrance to his reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives soon after; such a thing as a divorce, even an ugly one, would hardly merit a mention. Still, we have quite recently witnessed the destruction of powerful men—Wilbur Mills and Wayne Hays to name only two—for forms of misconduct that do not come near the gravity of Chappaquiddick.

Teddy Kennedy, then, in some way seems to be exempt, in his own eyes, in the eyes of his supporters, and, so we are told, in the eyes of his competitors, among them the incumbent President of the United States, from the possibility of harsh political retribution for past misdeeds. How is it possible, even in so morally permissive an age, for a man caught publicly in what must at the very politest be called an act of criminal cowardice to dream of coming before the electorate and asking to be put in charge of its governance? The fact that there has been a decline in public concern over the moral conduct of public officials hardly constitutes a satisfactory explanation since, as Watergate demonstrated, when there is a will to do so, the electorate's considerable inertia and resistance can be quite sensationally overcome.

True, it does seem to help if one is a Democrat, particularly a liberal Democrat: not only because the press tends to be biased in favor of liberal Democrats, which nowadays it undoubtedly is, but because there is something in the tough old street-smart traditional style of the Democratic party that invites people to participate in its own habit of winking at human foibles, while the starchy show of righteousness in the style of so many Republicans rouses people to the pleasures of catching them out. But his being a Democrat cannot by itself explain Teddy Kennedy's expectations of tolerance either. The Presidency is just too big a prize, too passionately pursued, too subject to envy and public scrutiny, for an aspirant to the position to be able to rely on his party's customary latitude.

And if Teddy Kennedy is considered to be exempt from the problems of honor and repute that would surely prove a sore affliction to most ordinary politicians in his position, he is held to a very special standard in other areas as well. For example, while the old party structures are increasingly breaking down and the voters are showing their unwillingness to be "delivered"—not even to primaries, let alone to general elections—by party bosses and party machines, it does not seem to be accounted the slightest difficulty for Kennedy that he is recognizably a very old-fashioned kind of boss of a very old-fashioned kind of machine.

Or an opposite and in a sense more telling example of the special standard applied to him is the way it has been deemed a cause for particular celebration by his supporters since the beginning of his first term in the Senate that he should have proved a hard-working, conscientious Senator. Now, no one in this country is so naive as to be surprised that the U.S. Congress includes a certain number of less than hard-working and conscientious men. Indeed, a good deal of his colleagues' famous enthusiasm over Teddy's seriousness was at first expressed by means of an invidious comparison between his behavior and the generally cavalier attitude to Senate business that had been displayed by his own brother Jack when he had entered that body. On the other hand, Teddy must surely be far from unique in being serious about his responsibilities. The fuss about his performance as a Senator seemed to convey a certain astonishment that this light-minded and frivolous young man, elected from the family fiefdom as an extension of the family dynasty, should have been able or inclined to perform at all. Later, when he had established himself without question, the talk of his senatorial proficiency suggested a somewhat altered sense of him, not as the man once thought unable to assume responsibilities, but rather as a man not really required to assume them and doing so out of an admirable spirit of *noblesse oblige*.

Either way, those who have set out to praise him have inevitably implied that his being a good Senator is not at all something we had a right to take for granted, rather as one is not inclined to take for granted that a woman who is a great beauty will also be friendly and helpful.

That Teddy Kennedy is not held to be a serious liability to his party but in fact an asset; that he is not recognized as one of the old-fashioned baronial pols whom party reformers hold in such high contempt; that he is thought to merit extra credit for doing what is rather sternly demanded of everyone else—these are the marks of a very special political fate in America, to be given title, as it were at birth, to residency in the White House. It is the fate that since January 1961 has been marked out for members of the family of Joseph P. Kennedy. And as we now know, what we did not know when John F. Kennedy was elected President and had only begun to understand when our

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perception got clouded over by the unbelievable deadening horror of the second Kennedy assassination, it is a fate which symbolizes the great struggle that has been taking place in American society for some years now between the old liberalism and the New Politics.

There seems to have been another Kennedy fate as well, private and ghastly, on which it would be presumptuous and in any case impossible to comment. If the gods had selected Joseph P. Kennedy for a more than full measure of pride and glory, in even greater measure they sent their daughters, the Furies, to pursue him. Except as this fate had a certain unavoidable bearing on the course of history, it is best left to the realm of prayer and mystery. What there is for an outside observer to say about the relation between the public glory and private chastisement of being a Kennedy is that no amount of the latter seems to have dimmed the quest for the former.

II

WHEN John F. Kennedy was murdered in Dallas, Robert F. Kennedy was immediately designated heir apparent by the fallen President's supporters. Across the Potomac in McLean, Virginia, the Pretender's court assembled, waiting to recross the tidal channel. The loyalist exodus from the White House and Cabinet was achieved with all deliberate speed, with only an occasional straggler, or perhaps intelligence gatherer, like Richard Goodwin, left behind. The question was only when to move. And Vietnam and Eugene McCarthy were before too long to provide the answer: with Lyndon Johnson toppled, the time to move was 1968. When Robert F. Kennedy was murdered in Los Angeles, Edward M. Kennedy was immediately designated heir apparent. The court had by now somewhat scattered; there was fear for the new heir's life; the country needed a respite. The question was once again only when, but this time the answer was to be deferred for a decade.

The point is that for a significant number of Kennedy supporters, the order of succession was both self-evident and inevitable. For all one knows, this same order of succession had been laid down in someone's mind—perhaps Joseph P. Kennedy had now and then permitted himself to entertain a dream of virtually endless Kennedy rule —even before the first assassination. (The daring and imagination behind such a vision of hereditary succession is little short of awesome. After all, the most accomplished great family in American politics, the Adamses, had been patient enough to hand the torch from generation to generation.)

Part of those first hurried turnings to the next Kennedy in line—after Bobby's assassination there were to be jokes, which were not altogether jokes, about John-John, then entering first or second grade—had to do with a widespread feeling that the country's original appointment with John F. Kennedy had not been kept, that there was a fulfillment, a completion still owing. Bobby of course became a figure in his own right, all the more so in that repudiating the war his brother had gotten us into came to be central to his political position. But his figuredom nevertheless continued to depend on, and to exploit, this sense of guilt and obligation toward his brother. With the assassination of Bobby, this feeling did not so much intensify as settle down into the status of superstition.

In the decade during which Teddy has been hesitating, however, the country has witnessed so many political dramas, not excluding revelations about the sexual and foreign-affairs escapades of brother Jack, that the earlier sensation of a consummation interrupted has been pretty thoroughly dissipated by now.

Be that as it may, the Kennedy title to the Presidency, for those who loyally support it, lies elsewhere than in the national guilt or superstition. It lies in a system of attitudes and beliefs I some years ago referred to as Kennedyism* and about the influence of which on our political life we have since had the occasion to learn a good deal more.

Here again, as he did in his account of what he so clearly hopes will be known to posterity as the first Kennedy administration, Arthur Schlesinger provides a most useful guide to these attitudes and beliefs. In some ways *Robert Kennedy and His Times* is the historian's most revealing work because in the hastiness I have spoken of, as well as in the unabashedly open apology for its subject's brief and far from noble career, even the thinnest patina of serious history-writing is missing.

Schlesinger's career as a historian, to be sure, has always been at the service of his politics. Beginning with Andrew Jackson, he has sought to demonstrate a straight line of progress via Franklin D. Roosevelt to the liberal wing of the Democratic party in the mid-20th-century. In this enterprise he has often been entertaining, sometimes moving, and occasionally persuasive. To be a historian in the service of party, broadly understood, is a perfectly reputable calling. But now and then it has driven him from the entertaining and persuasive to the outright comic: the rapidity with which he has been forced to shift from a belief in a strong Presidency when a Democrat of his persuasion was in power to his fear of an "imperial Presidency" when a Republican (or wrong sort of

* COMMENTARY, January 1970. These beliefs may or may not have genuinely been shared by the Kennedy brothers themselves. Two of them are dead, and the question is irrelevant anyway, since whatever they themselves believed, they were all, understandably, perfectly happy to exploit the Kennedyism of others.

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Democrat) was in power, for example, can only be seen as the tribute his intellectual dignity was prepared to pay to his political commitment.

YET even granted the ulterior purpose of his work on Jackson and Roosevelt, when the subject became the Kennedys his writing moved onto a new plane of naked partisanship. No longer seeking to find the higher national destiny in the fortunes of a general liberal tendency, he has now quite simply become court historian to the Kennedy dynasty, past and—if he has his way—future. Perhaps it was that the Kennedy Presidency provided him with a new and irresistible perspective, namely, that from inside the White House; both Kennedy books after all draw heavily on his own experience, no doubt a delicious temptation to a historian. Whatever the reason for it, in the book on Bobby even the slightest pretense at distance or dispassion has been dropped. Thus it provides an invaluable, albeit unwitting, glimpse into the minds of those who claim that America reached a new height of greatness on the morning of January 20, 1961, and that the country can return to it again only on the shoulders of one privately troubled, publicly questionable Senator from the less than politically impeccable state of Massachusetts.

In reading Schlesinger, then, the first thing one discovers—or rediscovers—is that in the eyes of true believers the brothers Kennedy are not to be forgiven but on the contrary valued all the more for their private misdeeds. They are to be recognized as men who have transcended the narrow, dreary bounds of propriety, through whose veins has coursed a richer substance than the thin blood of pedestrian virtue. The sort of thing that the friends of an ordinary politician might wish to have hushed up about him—for instance, that one day in an ugly rage and with little provocation, Bobby Kennedy as an adult got into a bloody fist fight with a bunch of kids on a Washington ball field—becomes, in the telling of his story, an enrichment to our understanding of his pain and complexity. True, Bobby is dead now; stories of this kind, or any kind, can no longer hurt him. But it is not in any spirit of historical accuracy or completeness that details which might normally be considered rather sordid are added to the Kennedy saga. They are there rather to serve the claim to some special grandeur—as it used to be popular to say of Henry VIII that he had bad table manners.

The truth is that we have long been asked to regard various forms of misconduct on the part of people named Kennedy, from small to large, as the peccadillos—fascinating and endearing—of royalty. The idea that the Kennedys are America's first royal family is certainly not a new one. Originally used as a kind of metaphor when Jack and Jackie were first being taken to the hearts of the world as the beautiful young Prince and Princess Charming of the rich kingdom beyond the sea, like many metaphors of our time it quickly came to have a literal life of its own. Kennedy's Washington, we heard, had begun to glitter in a manner at last commensurate with the city's position as one of the great capitals in world history. It was now no longer the dull provincial river town which had for well over a century served as second home to those venal and backward representatives of a hapless electorate (the men of Washington whom Henry Adams had once so eloquently referred to as "hogs"), but the country's, and the world's, new center of fashion, art, and intellect, great cuisine and sparkling conversation. Women were clever and beautiful, men were brilliant and dashing, and over it all presided the suitably scapegrace monarch and princes of the royal blood. America had come of age.

In addition to being brilliant and dashing, it was said, the Kennedys were—and required their minions to be—something called "tough." A tough young royal family and its court were to be distinguished from decadent old ones. They were in control, they understood the requirements of rule, and they set out to minimize cant and hypocrisy—the twin diseases of democracy. A tough young royal family was unembarrassed by nepotism, made no bones about looking after friends and attempting to punish critics; and refused to pander to political prudery: patronage was patronage and putting the arm on Congress was putting the arm on Congress. Above all, a tough young royal family wasted little time either blinking or regretting difficult decisions, from eyeball-to-eyeball confrontations with the enemy to the deposing of an ill-regarded ally.

Thus, for certain people the election of Teddy Kennedy to the Presidency in 1980 or 1984—family tribulations, Chappaquiddick, and all—would not be merely an election but a kind of American restoration.

III

IT WAS not only or even primarily by virtue of their rights as royalty, however, that the demand for special allowance and exoneration was constantly being pressed on behalf of the Kennedys. For the deficiencies of the three brothers were in the end to prove something even more important about them than that they were a cut above the commonality. According to their supporters, each display of Kennedy weakness was first and foremost an opportunity for the subsequent display of strength, or, to use the term so dear to the hearts of Kennedyites, for "growth."

First there was Jack, who might have appeared, and indeed for a time was, the roughhouse son of a roughhouse and politically unappetizing Irish millionaire father. Many of the liberal loyalists

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who had wept for Adlai Stevenson in 1960 were, to begin with, rather glum and stand-offish at the prospect of Jack's Presidency, despite the best efforts of their former ally, Arthur Schlesinger, to soothe and reassure them about what they might expect from the young Senator. Then they began to note his transformation, virtually day by day and before their very eyes, into a bigger and better man—not as familiar to them as Adlai, perhaps, but in the end all the more admirable for the very distance he had had to travel from his suspect youth. And nothing better betokened this transformation from crude pol to liberal knight errant than the way they themselves, after the damp chill of Eisenhower, were now being made to feel at home in Washington.

Next came Bobby, who provided if anything an even more dramatic instance of how a man could change. From a young counsel to Senator Joseph R. McCarthy to the patron saint of the peace movement, from the Attorney General whose chief passion seemed to be the prosecution and conviction of Jimmy Hoffa to the junior Senator from New York whose chief passion was to clean up the Bedford-Stuyvesant ghetto, and from the testy and vindictive young man who worked in his brother's first senatorial campaign to the gentle, self-deprecating jokester of his own presidential primary campaign—the entire career of Bobby came to be represented by and for the Kennedyites as, to borrow David Halberstam's term, an "odyssey," a strange and wonderful journey out of darkness into light.

The case of Teddy has been somewhat different from that of his older brothers. Here the putative growing process has been less smoothly continuous than with them, partly because his career commenced at a higher point in the family's liberal elevation and partly because what he had to grow out of was less political and more personal. He had been caught in individual moments of boyish frailty—cheating on an exam, running away from the scene of an accidental death that he himself had occasioned and then conspired to leave too long unreported—moments whose expiation would have caused him to grow rather more in spurts than gradually over time. Of Teddy it has been said, and in the speech written for him by his brother Jack's speechwriters to explain his conduct in the matter of the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne he implied it of himself, that the night he ducked out on Chappaquiddick was the night he grew heavy and wise with human suffering.

But whatever the variations in both the circumstances and rate of this development, in one major respect the growth of all the Kennedy brothers was held to be the same. Whether sudden or gradual, the product of defeat or triumph, in all three cases the enlargement of spirit detected by their supporters in the Kennedy brothers resulted in a marked shift to the Left.

Jack, we have been assured repeatedly by Kennedyite commentators, was at the time of his death coming to be an increasingly convinced opponent of American interventions abroad. Despite his electrifying proclamation that he was "*ein Berliner*," for instance, or his initially perhaps overjaunty meddling in the internal affairs of Southeast Asian countries (we may, out of boredom if nothing else, set aside the whole question of "responsibility" for the Bay of Pigs), he would certainly, they say, never have allowed us to get enmired in Vietnam or to continue on in the spiraling madness of the arms race with the Soviet Union. The man who on his inauguration day had declared the country's willingness to pay any price and bear any burden in defense of liberty had thus in less than a thousand days, or so runs his legend, grown to understand that the true defense of liberty lay in America's looking first to its own condition.

Bobby, of course, is known to have understood this as well, though he made no firm public declaration of the fact until 1968. We have, among others, Arthur Schlesinger's word for it that Bobby's silence on Vietnam was itself a sign of his selfless passion on the subject: he did not wish to speak out lest he be misinterpreted as doing so only for the sake of his own political advantage; it was only when Johnson stepped down that he could without being misinterpreted assume his rightful place as the leader of the opposition.

But Bobby's real growth did not take place in the realm of foreign policy, where he anyway appears to have been always more cautious and skeptical than his brother the President. What Bobby is said to have learned—and learned more than anything else from his own experience of suffering after Jack's assassination—was how "unacceptable" (his own word) were the conditions under which American society forced the blacks and the poor to live.

To judge from the Kennedy literature, this was in its way a more remarkable thing for Bobby to have learned than a sense of the limits of American power had been for Jack. Bobby was after all a rich man. He had grown up miles away from the nearest slum and utterly uncomprehending, as he himself was to say, of either the sorrows or the fury of the black man. Indeed, he was one day to tell Jack Newfield, a Jew born in darkest Brooklyn, how much he envied the journalist the childhood of poverty which had left him with a true instinctive understanding of the poor—a remark reported with all due credulity and solemnity both by Newfield in his book about Bobby and Schlesinger in his. Thus while not even his most besotted admirer would dream of claiming that Bobby Kennedy was the first man in America, or in the Democratic party, or in the Senate, and certainly not in the state of New York, to champion the

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black and the poor, his very belatedness in doing so was to merit him a large extra measure of political as well as moral credit.

And if he was to be admired, and supported, above Hubert Humphrey, say, because Humphrey had always been an ardent and courageous domestic liberal and therefore had never "grown," Bobby had also not been hampered by a long liberal past in another way: he did not suffer from that hardening of the political arteries that left Humphrey-style liberals so sadly resistant to all the new currents of militancy sweeping the country's youth. In other words, precisely because he had not been a liberal for too long, he was able to open himself the more readily to all those new and fresh and creative influences of radicalism.

The highest kudos he was to receive from that band of followers not known to be stinting with their kudos was for the way he could use simple, unequivocal terms in the face of poverty, terms like "unacceptable" or "intolerable." As it happened, his own model project for eradicating poverty in Bedford-Stuyvesant turned out not to have made any discernible, let alone large-scale, effect on the life of that community (except for the careless and costly dissipation of its political power). Nevertheless, what proved to be far more important to his admirers than any actual achievement was the manner in which he addressed himself, first as a Senator and then as a presidential candidate, in large terms like those cited above to equally wholesale issues: the needs and wants of blacks, poor people, and the young. His having grown to appreciate such issues—to act as appointed spokesman for groups who were in those years thought to be radically disaffected—was offered as finally the most significant evidence of his readiness and fitness to be President.

Because he had started so much later, Teddy had of course entered politics with a cleaner slate from the point of view of the Left; he had neither his own father nor Senator Joe McCarthy to live down. He did not in any sense have to reach or stretch to take the Kennedy mantle after Bobby's assassination, then—it was simply placed upon his shoulders. Nevertheless, Teddy's growth, too, was seen as having been a kind of move leftward, if not from a starting point on the Right then from the position of one whose ideology had been easily come by to the position of one in whom a new iron public will had been forged in the fires of personal crisis. Far from destroying Teddy, we are asked to believe, Chappaquiddick has in fact had the effect of turning him into the concerned and compassionate leader America desperately needs.

IV

THUS it seems safe to predict that the country will sooner or later, and probably sooner, be invited to resume its long interrupted affair with the Kennedys—that so brief dalliance the memory of whose pleasures Arthur Schlesinger would now attempt to arouse us with. No doubt there are many people among Jack's and Bobby's former entourages who feel that the invitation should have been issued long before now. Understandable as it was, Teddy's refusal to shoulder the burden of the restoration all those years, beginning even right there at the convention of 1968 and then in 1972 and 1976, left the candidacy of the Kennedy movement to such unsatisfactory, not to say unelectable, substitutes as George McGovern and Birch Bayh.

Now, in bringing about the reelection of the disaster-prone Richard Nixon, the McGovern candidacy at least had the virtue of keeping the situation in the Democratic party fluid and open to a Kennedy option. In 1976, however, it must have become clear to every Kennedyite singing the songs of the Potomac as he sat weeping by the waters of the Charles or the East River that Teddy must not postpone his, and their, return much longer. While he hesitates, too many successful usurpers like Carter might permanently divert the party and the country from their proper course.

He may, to be sure, hesitate yet again, out of considerations of political strategy. Nothing is more difficult to pinpoint nowadays than political fortunes at the presidential mid-term. Nevertheless, of one thing there is no doubt: the Kennedyites, with Teddy at their head, deem it their inalienable if not divine right to retake the White House. That much water has flowed over the dam—that vast and cataclysmic events have taken place—since they or their surrogates presided over the executive branch seems to be nothing to the point; as far as they are concerned, their absence from power for a decade and a half has been an arbitrary pause in the natural flow of things. Nor can they be overmuch concerned by the fact that their candidate is a figure calculated to set the mouths of a cocky and salacious, and pitiless, press to watering; buttressed by a poll or two, they appear to be serene in the conviction that what might be the undoing of another man will be no let or hindrance to a candidate named Edward M. Kennedy.

The source of this conviction is not Teddy's record of political achievement, any more than Bobby's record was the source of the conviction about him in 1968 that had he not been shot he would without the slightest question have won both the nomination and the election. As it was with both his brothers, Teddy's inalienable right to the Presidency is held to reside not in his accomplishments, or his views, but in his essence.

What the Kennedy essence is we have already seen: a princely sense of privilege combined with a leveler's sense of social welfare. And what is thus presaged in the dream of Teddy's election to the Presidency is a kind of left-wing monarchy, in

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which the court makes an alliance with various putatively oppressed minorities against those dreary, recalcitrant—and always potentially usurpatory—classes in the middle.

It is hinted that the country needs such a court to redeem the crudity of our artistic and political culture and to polish our national manners. This is some part of the argument, difficult to isolate but unmistakably present, with which all reformers have pressed their case against the machine-dominated representatives of the mob; but no political talk has been more redolent of the odors of class than that which has from very early on surrounded the Kennedys. And it is claimed outright that only this alliance of the "best people" with the struggling minorities—an alliance that is to be protected from harm by the courts and the press and a loyal, sensitive intelligentsia—can produce that condition which all good men everywhere call by the name of social justice. The restoration of the Kennedy dynasty, then, will set us a high tone as it sets us a great social example.

ONE of the mysteries of our political atmosphere is how and where it bred the myth of Kennedy high distinction. A country which has within the century witnessed the Presidencies of such men as Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt—it would be too impertinent in such a context even to hark back to the century of Abraham Lincoln, the two Adamses, Madison, Jefferson—has to have suffered a major loss of healthy self-regard to find the Kennedy Presidency distinguished for extraordinary qualities of mind or style or taste.

On the other hand, there is no mystery whatever abut the provenience of the idea that only America's most privileged citizens can be counted on to bring about a just society. It follows from the view that all important social issues must somehow be taken out of the political process and given over into the hands of an appointed elite. For, say the holders of this view, the American voter is on the whole a person moved only by his own selfish interests, is more likely than not a bigot, and lends himself pliantly to the engineering of his desires by the media of communication. He is therefore not to be trusted with the welfare of his fellows; only the fortunately disinterested should be allowed that responsibility.

No matter what Teddy himself might privately feel, this idea would without question be central to the character of his administration. As a politician he is not, and never has been, merely himself, an identifiable individual. He is an instrument, for obvious reasons the ideal instrument, for the recreation of an authentic and at last fulfilled Kennedy Washington. It remains to be seen whether that Washington, with its less than loving appreciation of the political wisdom of ordinary citizens, is something those very citizens can be seduced to vote into being.

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Passers-by

The Soviet Jew as Intellectual

Simon Markish

Janitors shovel away the snow
In the quiet suburbs;
Together with bearded peasants
I walk, a passer-by.

I glimpse women in headscarves,
Crazy alley curs yelp,
And rose-crimson samovars
Glow in cafés and houses.

—Osip Mandelstam, 1913

Jewish emigration from the USSR has now been going on for eight years. The number of émigrés is nearing the substantial figure of 150,000. Past are the first ecstatic reunions, the tearful embraces. Past too are the first disillusionments, resentments, and coolings-off, to say nothing of the first brawls, the hysterical attacks on the "historic motherland," and the amazement caused by these attacks, as well as by the impressive flow of recent "repatriates" from Vienna, not to Israel but to Rome, and another flow, less impressive but no less determined, of those seeking a new country elsewhere in Europe or across the ocean. Also past are the heated arguments over whether or not to help these false repatriates; past are the curses and exhortations, the pathetic appeals to democracy and the traditions of Jewish solidarity. It is time now to draw back from puzzled questioning and excited outpourings and to return to less emotional forms, to try without anger and partiality to explain the phenomenon of the Soviet Jew beyond the borders of his own, if unhistoric, motherland, a phenomenon that is new both to Jewry and to the West.

The present essay is not an attempt at a full understanding. It is concerned chiefly with one particular part of a thin layer of the new émigrés, what we might call the noisy minority, who find it hard to settle down in their new place of abode, chiefly, that is, in Israel. It should be said at the outset that I have in mind Jews in the proper sense of the word, not those whom others, be they Soviet bureaucrats or the Israeli rabbinate, regard as Jews. I have in mind those who consider themselves Jews by their own free and conscious choice. It is not so much that this is the only valuable criterion, but since what follows is a psychological portrait, concerned with the internal motivation of individual and social behavior, it is the criterion which comes naturally to the fore. What does it matter if the poet Korzhavin leaves Moscow, more or less by accident, turns up in Paris en route to the U.S., and there announces in the press that he is not a Jew but a Russian poet? So what if the Indologist Glazov, an active Christian, suddenly remembers that he is a Jew and begins, no less actively, to prepare himself for the land of his forefathers, and then, Israeli visa in hand, sets off straight for Boston, and then publishes a book, written according to him in Moscow, and in the book reports that he had never had the slightest intention of going to Israel, because "the Jews despise the gentle son of Mary of Bethlehem"? To me, these events mean one thing only: both the straightforward Korzhavin and the devious Glazov have excluded themselves from Jewry, at least for the present phase of their lives, and they should therefore be counted among the Russians, not the Jews, who have emigrated.

The first thing we must try and understand is the mental baggage which the Soviet Jew carries across the border. When I say Soviet Jew I do not mean the Orthodox Bukharan or Georgian Jew, who has to this day preserved himself as a religious minority and therefore as a particular social microstructure with its own social psychology. Nor do I mean those remnants of the Baltic Jews who have kept intact national traditions ranging from the linguistic to the political (such as Zionism and even Bundism). The Jew I have in mind is the everyday Soviet citizen of Jewish origin—as he is officially designated by the authorities—from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, or Rostov-on-Don, assimilated already in the second if not in the third generation. For such a person, Jewishness is a wholly negative characteristic. For some reason he is not like others, and for this unexplained reason he must tolerate hostility and all manner of persecution. Otherwise, he is just like any ordinary Soviet citizen.

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In describing such a person we should begin with the chief characteristic of Soviet man, which is his lack of any ideology. Solzhenitsyn has identified the "leading doctrine," Marxist-Leninist ideology, as the enemy and chief danger. In fact, ideology in the USSR is an empty convention, verbal ritual, the rules of the game, by which everyone is bound but which nobody takes seriously. An ideological vacuum has formed, a modern analogy to what Plato, in *Phaedo*, calls "misology," contempt for ideas and words. Socrates says, on the threshold of his death, that there is no greater danger than to suffer intellectual failure and to put the blame not on oneself, not on one's own inability to think properly, but on thought itself, to cast doubt and even to repudiate one's capacity and one's duty to think. Born out of revulsion toward the official and forcibly applied philosophy, the ideological vacuum has led to the negation of and refusal to accept any philosophy whatever.

Abhorring a vacuum, nature fills it with whatever comes to hand, partly independently—alcoholism, drugs, religious enthusiasm—and partly with the open or covert blessing of the authorities —careerism, materialism, and above all what is officially called Soviet patriotism, but what is in fact a variation of the old Russian imperial chauvinism, with its strict pecking-order of individual national pride, starting with the incomparably supreme Russian national pride and ending with some insignificantly minor one, like that of the Chukchi or the Nenetz. But the Jews have no place whatever in this pecking order. They are after all not a nation, and therefore national pride does not apply to them, and they can have no national history, no culture, no customs.

Much has been allowed to remain to other nations, even within officially permitted limits. The Russians have icons and church architecture, folklore and great military heroes. Recently they have restored to themselves the right to admire the patriarchal life of the village, with its traditional scale of values. The Chukchi, should they see fit, can talk about their tents of skin, or their hunting skills, or their shamans. By contrast, the Jew is naked, like Adam in Eden. Biblical antiquities are the property of the peoples of the Middle East. The Talmud, as every schoolboy knows, is nothing but reactionary ravings. Yehuda Halevi was a Spaniard, Maimonides an Egyptian. The severe prohibition goes beyond the Baal Shem Tov and the *Haskalah* and the ritual-murder trials to include the Jewish labor movement, Jewish folk art, and the wooden synagogues that used to embellish Lithuania and Poland. Since the party's celebrated 1946 directives on ideological questions, Soviet propaganda has openly aimed to convince all Soviet citizens, "Soviet citizens of Jewish origin" included, that the Jew is a rootless cosmopolitan, a freeloader at someone else's table, a slanderer and potential traitor. And this is not just part of official doctrine which can be shrugged off, like the teaching on class struggle or the base and the superstructure. It is underpinned by the traditions of Russian literature—it is enough to mention Gogol and Dostoevsky—and it is echoed and approved by dissidents of conservative stripe, by Russian and other nationalists sitting in the same prisons and camps as Jewish nationalists. Thus in the case of the Soviet Jew, the general mental vacuum is being supplemented and intensified by a powerful sense of rootlessness, precisely the complex named by Simone Weil as *déracinement*.

Let us now consider the characteristics which are determined by membership in the intelligentsia, and see what position Jews hold inside this group. Once again, there is no need to become embroiled in arguments about the fate of the intelligentsia, about its merits and its vices, or whether it still deserves the old name or has become transformed into something quite different from what pre-revolutionary Russia knew by that name. Be all that as it may, there are some definite facts, some realities, which both its detractors and its admirers alike recognize. The intelligentsia is acutely aware of its "chosen" character, its superiority, its exclusiveness, and its elite quality. This awareness is directed both against the intelligentsia's old enemy, the authorities, and against its former idol, the people. The hostile and disgusted term, "they," refers today to the Central Committee *apparatchik* as well as to the plumber, to the ministry clerk and to the dairy-woman at the market, to the factory director and to the workers, to army officers and to "worker-peasant youth in army greatcoats." Closer relations with "them" have merely acted to reinforce the intellectuals' feeling of exclusiveness. For "their" part, the lower orders respond to the intelligentsia with hostility and scorn, if not outright hatred, while the higher orders feel a mixture of hostility, respect, and even a certain envy.

In pre-revolutionary Russian society, neither the bureaucracy nor the industrial or financial bourgeoisie had ever constituted an elite. The aristocratic elite was destroyed in the civil war, emigration, and terror. Thus the intelligentsia is the only legitimate elite group, that is, one that is protected and justified by traditions; and these traditions, however shaken, remain in force. High party and state officials, as well as KGB generals, strive to enter the salons of the discontented intelligentsia; it flatters them to be on friendly terms with writers, painters, actors (who in fact depend on them), and they seek out such friendships and ingratiate themselves with these people. Naturally, there is more ingratiating done when it is a real celebrity, but even an unknown radiates a sufficient glow. In Moscow in the 60's there was a certain Alexander Asarkan who had no money, no job, and was barely properly clothed. How he survived or found his food, nobody knew; most likely through the help of his friends. More-

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over, the KGB and the militia were on to him, and before every official holiday, twice a year, for the First of May and the Seventh of November, they tried to grab him and tuck him away in a mental hospital for a week or two. Yet from time to time, articles on art and the theater signed by "A. Asarkan" would appear in respectable journals and newspapers, including the powerful *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the chief organ of Soviet youth. And it was the editors who sought this collaboration, not Asarkan. Not that they could not manage without Asarkan, but the fact is that the name of a *lumpen*-intellectual, famous even in a tiny circle of the intelligentsia for his exemplary honesty and flawless record, gave the organ in question a certain glitter and moral authority.

Belonging to the intelligentsia also provides a certain minimum of material security. Given the generally low standard of living, and the fact that opportunities for spending money are greatly limited by the shortage, the sameness, and the low quality of goods, by the inaccessibility of many services that are elementary in the West, and by innumerable bureaucratic hurdles, intellectuals frequently do not go after high salaries but are perfectly satisfied just to make a living. And it is incomparably easier for the so-called free artist to make this living than it is for a worker or an office employee, to say nothing of the peasant. If we just take literature as an example, there are thousands of people in Moscow alone who live by various kinds of literary work, whether it be reviewing, editing manuscripts, compiling and annotating anthologies, writing occasional pieces for the periodical press, and so on. And most of them are proud of their intellectual occupations and independent positions; not only do they not seek salaried positions, but they despise their colleagues for dashing off every morning to their jobs in publishing houses. On the other hand, the very wealthiest sector of the population, not counting crooks and top party and state functionaries, is also to be found among the self-same intelligentsia. Certain film-makers, playwrights, novelists, and even some poets, if they write lyrics for songs, earn incomes that by Soviet standards are quite fabulous. The top people of the Soviet scientific intelligentsia also come into the bracket of the really wealthy.

The combination of these two circumstances has a powerful influence on the mentality of the intelligentsia. They have a unique feeling of stability and security, expressed in the idea, "We'll manage to get through somehow, we won't starve," and this feeling is enhanced by a sense of group solidarity and mutual help. At the same time, they are aware of the possibility of gaining the very heights of material success, a possibility which can be consciously and proudly rejected—"I could be rolling in money, if I agreed to work for 'them,' if I licked their backsides, if I sold my soul and talent to the devil." How real this possibility is, how much it is justified by talent, knowledge, or willingness to work—in a word, how much there is to sell—is of course another matter.

THE concept of the Jewish intellectual is complex and varied. If official Soviet attitudes are the test, the term fits any intellectual who is "noted down" as a Jew, that is, anyone whose identity card bears the designation "Jew." (This registration is obligatory and it signifies ethnic, not religious, affiliation.) In other words, as far as the authorities are concerned, everything is clear and unequivocal. But in fact, in the present post-Stalin, post-totalitarian era, it is not the authorities so much as the individual conscience that answers the question, "Who am I?"

The traditional reply, given during the best times of the old Russian-liberal intelligentsia, was "I am an intellectual." That is to say, it completely rejected the issue of nationality. Of course there are no statistics, but my impression is that today the number of Jews (by origin) who would answer the question in this way must be very few. One *might* hear such a reply from a Russian trying to dispel the anxiety and doubts of his Jewish friend, "What are you talking about? What kind of Jew are you? You're not a Jew and I'm not a Russian. We're both intellectuals. That's the only 'nationality' worth having and being proud of." Generally speaking, intellectual internationalism has about as few disciples in the USSR today as has proletarian internationalism. But it would be a mistake to ignore it altogether: among the émigrés it shows up sometimes quite strongly.

Another reply is, "I am a Russian intellectual." Within that formula are many shades of meaning, some almost diametrically opposed to one another. In 1970, a press conference was held at which more than fifty highly placed Jews demonstrated their loyalty to Soviet power and their contempt for Zionism and Israel. Not many of them were volunteers; in seeking participants, the organizers had used threats as well as the promise of rich reward. But not all the candidates turned out to be sufficiently compliant or cowardly. Some simply refused to talk and cursed the whole venture roundly. The film director Mikhail Romm replied that he recognized every genre in art except farce. Nobody seems to have replied more sensibly and more honestly than the philosopher Mikhail Lifshits, an old Communist and unswerving Marxist, the favorite pupil of the famous Georg Lukács. "You have invited me by mistake," he said. "I am not a Jew, but a Russian intellectual." "But surely your documents show you to be a Jew?" "Yes, but that doesn't mean anything, it's an empty bureaucratic formality. As far as I myself am concerned, as well as all my friends and those who share my views, I am a Russian intellectual."

In this instance, "Russian" means "All-Russian," i.e., it signifies geographical and not ethnic status, and it implies the territory of the old Rus-

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sian empire, the USSR of today. (In the same way, before the revolution, Russian revolutionaries, whether Socialist Revolutionaries or Social Democrats, made no ethnic distinctions.) But much more often, "Russian" indicates attachment to Russia, its culture, its history and language. One of the first people after the death of Stalin to start writing accurately and with great affection about the Russian countryside was Efim Dorosh, for many years on the editorial board of the journal *Novyi Mir*, the main stronghold of the liberal Soviet intelligentsia. Later he published, also in *Novyi Mir*, some lyrical notes on northeastern Rus, the historic nucleus of the Russian state and of the Russian empire, and—in what took terrific nerve for those days—voiced unstinting praise for St. Sergius of Radonezh, the founder of the Trinity-Sergius monastery at Zagorsk, the great *national* saint of the Russian people. Very few readers knew that Efim Dorosh was a Jew and that he was using a pseudonym, which he did, not because he was ashamed of his origin or was trying to hide it, but simply because he had nothing at all in common with Jewry. Nor was it religious motives that determined his choice and his conduct; as far as can be recalled he was, like the rest of the editorial staff of *Novyi Mir*, an atheist. Rather, he was acting out of national self-awareness.

In today's conditions, national self-awareness on the part of Russian intellectuals of Jewish origin often assumes a tinge of tragedy. The literature specialist, Samarii Israilovich Velikovskii—a most ill-sounding name and patronymic to the true Russian ear—told his friends: "If the day comes when we have to leave, when they start driving us out with force, then I'll kill myself. This is my country, my people, my culture, and if I am no longer wanted here, then life won't be worth living."

Russian self-consciousness can lead a Russified Jew even to the point of anti-Semitism. Sometimes this ardor of the neophyte is comic, sometimes dangerous, although it is never as dangerous as the anti-Semitism of the Jew who has got himself to the top of the system and adopted or copied the mores of the leadership, including their hostility and revulsion for the Jews. One such, Alexander Chakovskii, the present chief editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the most authoritative semi-official organ in the USSR, once confessed in my presence, "I cannot stand the Jews!" This happened in a Jewish home and only Jews were there, so one cannot suppose that Chakovskii was taking the opportunity to assure his masters of his reliability, his immunity to the bacillus of Jewish nationalism in whatever form. More likely, Chakovskii and those like him actually detest the Jews and vilify them beyond the call of their official and party duty, just as the "first Jew" under Stalin, Lazar Kaganovich, used to do in his time. They cannot stand being reminded of their origin, even though they will bring it up themselves if necessary or useful. (It was the same Chakovskii who "represented" Soviet Jewry at the opening of the memorial to the Unknown Jew in Paris, and who last year appeared on French television where he cleverly managed to stop his interviewer, Jean Daniel, the editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, by interrupting a long question which began, "Now, you, Mr. Chakovskii, are a patriot and a Russian nationalist," by saying, "I am not a Russian nationalist, Mr. Daniel, I am a Jew." There was no need to say anything more, since the question, whatever it was going to be, was no longer valid.)

Who in fact are these people, these Soviet Mordecais? In the eyes of the leaders and of everyone else they are and always will be just scabby "Yids," and they know it. But what are they in their own eyes? Most likely, they try not to think about it too much, at any rate as long as there's food left in the manger and the favor of Artaxerxes shows no signs of diminishing.

STILL ANOTHER reply to the question, "Who am I?" is, "I am a Jew." This answer also has some nuances, ranging from thought-out, mature conviction, formed after long searching through religion, politics, or culture, and sometimes all three together, all the way to the sudden flash of realization, perhaps following a casual insult or some unexpected enthusiasm. People who reply in this way are much better known in the West than any of the others: they have talked about themselves quite a bit over the last seven years. It is true that they do not account for all those who have emigrated or those who are preparing to emigrate. Nor do all of them wish to emigrate. It seems that more and more Jews are saying, "I am a Jew" and then adding a "Russian," or "Soviet" Jew and insisting as much on the adjective as on the noun. They want to remain Jews, to resurrect or acquire awareness of genuine national membership, but in their birthplace, the USSR, Russia. Among them are believers as well as atheists; connoisseurs of Jewish culture of different countries and different periods and people who are not in the least concerned with such things; Zionist sympathizers as well as those indifferent to Zionism and those even hostile to it. But they are all united by the determination not to leave, and it is a determination that is open-eyed and responsible. These people will become neither emigrants nor repatriates.

There remains a final response: "I don't know." Naturally, it is the most common reply of all. To be more precise, people do not often embark on dialogues with themselves, and even if they do, they generally get bogged down right at the beginning. The general lack of ideas and the rootlessness to which I referred earlier, the lack of any kind of information about the Jews apart from anti-Semitic writings like *The Reactionary Essence of Judaism* or *Zionism Unmasked*, and finally the difficulties of everyday life do not merely hamper introspection, they almost instantly lead

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reflection to a dead end. The negative assessment is imposed from outside: you are not like others, you are worse than all the rest. One does not need to be a logician to see and feel the impossibility of accepting the negative definition. Yet there is no positive definition available anywhere. Thus, one withdraws into "I don't know."

It does not follow, however, that the reasons for not knowing are themselves wholly negative. They include many other considerations, including even reasons of lofty morality. For example, repentance, the awareness of collective guilt. How can I detach myself from this reality which is the Soviet people, when by my very participation in its existence I share in its suffering and its crimes? One hears this argument from old men who have survived the purges, pre-war and postwar, but one hears it also from young people born after the death of Stalin. Nor is this merely an argument against emigration, but rather the acceptance of a certain responsibility and hence a recognition of a certain affinity, which nevertheless does not vitiate the sense of isolation. On the one hand, you are not like the rest, and on the other hand, you are just the same as the rest. Or in simpler, more down-to-earth terms, one's whole life has been spent with this people, one has starved with them and frozen with them, had one's joys and celebrated with them. True, there have been swine among them, vicious anti-Semites, but then there are also close and dear friends, more dear than any of one's own "tribe." How can I tear myself away from them, place myself in opposition to them?

Clearly, this last category, like any neutral group, is not stable and provides material for the other groups.

Once an intellectual is abroad, and has passed through the period of shock which every emigrant from the USSR must inevitably experience—it is largely a mixture of alarm and rapture—he begins to adapt psychologically. His mind, and especially his emotions, formulate a set of responses to his new situation. Whether the response will be predominantly gloomy or bright depends as much on physical circumstances as on mental baggage, though possibly the latter is more important. With all the difficulties of life in Israel, material conditions there are, with rare exceptions, greatly more favorable than in the USSR. But neither Israel nor the West is like the preconception of them which the future émigré has before his departure, and that is because his preconceptions are made up of Soviet components. It might be said that this is no more true of the present-day émigré than it was of the Jewish émigrés from Russia at the turn of the century, and that the real America was sharply different from the Realm of Gold dreamed of in the *shtetl*. But the mental baggage of Jews was different then, the disparity between ideal and real was experienced differently.

The very departure from the USSR is felt by the émigré to be something of a feat, and in many cases it is just that: months and even years of "refusal" status, letters of protest, arrest, prison, and so on. But even if everything has gone smoothly, the émigré has had to overcome his terror of the all-powerful state and authorities, a feeling which is incomprehensible to anyone in a free society. And overcoming that terror is also a feat in itself. Every émigré, moreover, has to tolerate all manner of humiliation and loss to the very last, at the various customs checkpoints—and not only in the USSR; if he goes by train, he is openly robbed by the Poles and the Czechs—and his sufferings acquire the nature of virtues in his mind. He is a hero and a martyr, and therefore has a legitimate claim to retribution.

Judging as he does by Soviet standards, he is not capable of understanding that his retribution begins from the moment he steps off the train or the plane in Vienna. Everything that comes his way he accepts as his just desert. This is not only because he is a hero and a martyr, but because everything has already been paid for by the American Jews. And Israel has nothing to do with it, he owes nothing to Israel. Hence the fierce aggressiveness of some émigrés in their very first moments on Israeli soil, in the immigration hall at the airport. Hence the frank discussions in Vienna. The immigration official from the Jewish Agency asks one of those who have announced their intention to go straight to the U.S., Canada, or Australia, "But what if you could only have gone to Israel; would you have emigrated?" And without any hesitation the "straighter" answers, "No."

Judging as he does by Soviet standards, he is not capable of understanding that the country he has come to has its own laws and customs, its own difficulties, and that it is trying to overcome them in its own way. He does not understand that the only way to get used to the place and to feel at home is to accept the rules of the game, and not to stand on the doorstep and demand that they be abolished or fundamentally altered. This is not to say that the rules are ideal; many of them are no good at all. But if you want to tidy up the house, you might at least wait until you are inside. The "noisy minority," however, do not go beyond the doorstep; their sense of superiority does not allow it. We have suffered more than anybody else, they seem to say, we know better than anybody else, we will explain everything and teach everything.

The passion for preaching overcomes new émigrés from Russia, regardless of their origin, Jew and non-Jew alike. In essence there is no difference between the repatriate, hardly able to express himself in kitchen Hebrew but already discoursing on the poverty of spiritual life in Israel, and the professional émigré traveling around different countries and answering all questions without hesitation, settling any problem without the

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least difficulty. Though there is one important distinction. The émigré knows his place after all, he knows he is a stranger whom nobody has asked or especially invited, and so he knows how far he may go in his attacks and exposures. It is one thing to hear the view expressed at dinner in a private home that Harvard University is worse than Elets Teachers' Training Institute; this is hardly a view to put into a newspaper or to pronounce from the lecture platform. The repatriate, however, knows no such limitations or inhibitions.

Coming to the concrete reasons for dissatisfaction and disillusionment, we should exclude the obvious and well-known ones like the hard climate in Israel or the rude civil servants. All new arrivals suffer from these, whatever country they come from. The former Soviet Jewish intellectual, especially if he belonged to, or numbered himself among, the so-called creative intelligentsia, is shaken, apart from everything else (and sometimes above all else), by the change in his accepted scale of values. He is no longer in an elite, or at any rate not in the only elite, and not the most important of elites. To be a writer is no more honorable than to be an engineer or a doctor. Poverty and lack of success are no longer evidence of a proud and independent talent, but more likely the result of hopes that have been dashed. The accepted scale of values is overturned, and there remains only the choice between adopting a new one and living in a fantasy world of old and hurriedly renovated values—or repudiating any scale of values altogether.

The first course represents, strictly speaking, a completely different subject of discussion: namely, the *successful* adaptation and integration of immigrants. It is worth pointing out that the quickest to adapt are those who have inner resources, people with convictions and ideas. For example, and above all, believers or new believers. Or old-school Zionists, although even they are not immune from disillusionment, irritation, and straightforward rebellion. We need not dwell on the loud protests made by Georgian Jews about religious life in Israel, since their psychology is a mystery to many besides myself; complaints about the inadequate piety of the state of Israel and of its scandalous godlessness are clearly not the monopoly of the old Hasidic inhabitants of Mea Shearim. The point is, however, that the first course, the course of adaptation, is most accessible to those who bring with them or quickly acquire some positive spiritual equipment: to put it simply, a love of God, of freedom, of the Jews, of Israel, but only the real Israel, and not the one dreamed up in the Soviet vacuum, bathed in tears of humiliation or drunkenness. These people grow quickly in their new soil, put down roots, forget the discrimination of their Soviet existence, forget even that existence itself, the land of the Soviets, Russia, and their past hatred for it, once so fierce as to serve virtually as the chief content of their lives.

The second course is the most interesting to the outside observer and, most likely, the most bitter to those who follow it. It is a course taken by many a Soviet intellectual in Israel. He who felt himself to be a Jew in Russia, and for that very reason "returned to the historic homeland," finds himself once there to be a Russian, not because of Israeli phraseology, not because it is generally accepted that immigrants from Russia are called Russians, but because he suddenly feels for certain that he *is* a Russian. In Russia, being a Jew was the most important mark of self-identification, whether personal or social; it was the main motive and factor in any interpretation of one's destiny; it marked the conscious or subconscious frontier between one's own and what was not one's own, between "ours" and "not ours." This is perhaps natural in any diaspora, and almost inevitable in the present conditions of the USSR. But just as inevitable is the process of reidentification in the new environment, Israel.

If the mind recoils from the new circumstances, once so desired when they were a dream and a goal, and if the mind does not want to harbor this new feeling of hostility but cannot overcome it, and also cannot or does not want to change the circumstances, then in order to avoid self-destruction it will return to the past, reshape it, shifting the emphasis, reassessing evaluations. All the old forms, standards, and patterns are preserved. We are not like the others, we are better, we know more; but they do not value us, they envy us, they don't want to help. Everything around us is alien; we are not interested in "their" petty concerns and primitive pleasures; we are aristocrats of the mind, we live our own internal lives, we are intellectuals, we are members of the Russian intelligentsia, we are the third wave of the Russian emigration. We are in Israel by chance, just as we could be in Canada or in France, by chance.

Passers-by were they *there*, passers-by are they now here.

Last year in Jerusalem, I had a conversation with an ex-Leningrad man. He was between thirty and forty years old, married, with children. He had been educated as a philologist, with Russian literature as his specialty, and in Russia he had been a schoolteacher. For several years he had worked with energy and courage to obtain his exit visa: he had signed letters, met foreign correspondents, taken part in hunger strikes. And he talked about himself now with the same courage, holding nothing back, without posturings or hypocrisy. "When I first got my flat in Jerusalem and first took a look out of *my own* window, I felt as though I were on the moon. Where had I landed, what had I brought my family to?" He works, earns a living, doesn't complain, doesn't curse Israel. But he is not interested in anything apart from 20th-century Russian poetry. He is utterly indifferent to everything Jewish, be it antiquity or the Middle Ages or Russian Jewish culture. "Maybe," I suggested, "you should look for

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a job in Europe or the States, teaching Russian literature? There's a real émigré life there, too, and not a phantom one." "No, to leave now would mean losing my last bit of self-respect, my last self-justification."

It seems, then, that everything else has already been lost: living in one's own country, among one's own people, sharing the interests of one's own nation. While they were waiting to get out of the USSR, the would-be émigrés used to say, "If only they'd let me out, I'd dig the land and gather oranges." Now all they can do is to browse through Russian books and Soviet memories. Quite wrongly, the Russian émigrés try to make a distinction between "Russian" and "Soviet": everything bad is Soviet, everything good is Russian. But Soviet life is a reality in which the bad is interwoven with the good, as is the case in any real situation. Soviet means the KGB and anti-Semitism, bullying and Brezhnev, but it also means eating at your friend's house, with endless heart-to-hearts and openness, and it means the white nights and the Russian language, and it even means Solzhenitsyn.

THIS spring there took place at Geneva University a symposium on Russian-language literature in the USSR and in the émigré communities. Among the participants was Maia Kaganskaia, originally from Kiev but now a Jerusalemite of a year-and-a-half's standing. During the "round-table" session, in the enormous 600-seat auditorium, Maia Kaganskaia declared: "We are the third emigration . . . we have come to Europe as to our home." It was sincere and touching, and the audience applauded her in warm sympathy. Later, in private conversation, when asked if she wanted to leave Israel, she replied, "No, I don't want to leave, but I would like to get out from time to time."

Kaganskaia is one of the writers of the Tel Aviv Russian journal, *Vremia i my*. The Russian-language press in Israel is abundant and varied, ranging from a pornographic weekly to a hasidic quarterly. And this is understandable, since some will rush to express themselves in print while others want fruits that are forbidden in the USSR, and they only know Russian. And after all, Russian is a language of the Jews, so regardless of their quality or content, these publications are doing the same job as those in Hungarian or Polish or German: they are serving first-generation Israelis, the old and the middle-aged, who have not mastered Hebrew.*

Vremia i my, however, occupies a quite special place. It is not an Israeli journal in Russian, but a Russian émigré journal that happens to be published in Israel. Its readers, including its Israeli readers, know this perfectly well. In the issue dated November 19, 1977, a reader writes:

> People say your journal is as good as [the émigré journal] *Kontinent* . . . and that it reminds one of *Novyi Mir*. . . . I agree that it is a good journal, but I want to point out that even a good Russian journal is not needed in Israel. Indeed, it is dangerous. . . . It is not important where we came from, but what we have come to. It is no accident that the Jews who have left Russia have come to rest in more than one place. . . . It's all very well to pine like your authors for the Arbat backstreets, but they should do it in a Paris café, where émigré nostalgia is the normal thing. In Israel one must be an Israeli, not an émigré. Many new Israelis would like to build a new Russia here in Israel, with the Russian language, Russian theater, Russian cinema, but without the KGB. . . . But that is not our task. . . . The little weeklies and newspapers in Russian are all right, in my view. They serve the everyday needs of the ordinary citizen. But a journal like yours deprives Israeli culture of potential participants, keeping them for Russian culture which, frankly, has no need of them whatsoever.

Apart from the dubious remark about the possible harm being done by the journal, this reader's letter is entirely accurate and to the point. *Vremia i my* could just as well be coming out of Paris or Toronto or pre-war Harbin. Only the material on "local life" would be different; nothing else. Or perhaps one other thing: the pangs of nostalgia would not be as bitter. These intellectuals have come "home" from a "foreign land," and it turns out that "home" is a "foreign land" and the "foreign land" has become "home"—and it is hard to imagine anything worse. Hence the deep horror inspired by Israel and the hatred for it expressed in one of the most talented works published in the journal, "The Notification," a story by Zinovi Zinik. In saying this, I do not intend any reproach of the journal or its authors. They are free individuals living in a free country and have the right of free speech, all the more so since what they are saying is honest (if not always talented, or competent, but that is another matter) and evidently they have their public.

IN HUNGARY, where it is much easier to leave, as well as to return, the story was told of a Jewish family which emigrated legally and legally went back to Hungary five years later. The explanation was that it is better to be a Jew in Hungary than a Hungarian in Israel. If things in the USSR were as they are in Hungary, both in general and for the Jews in particular, then quite a few "Russians" would make tracks to return "home," for the same reason. But the way back is closed. And so occasionally one will hear someone saying, "If I could be back in Leningrad again, and wander along the Neva embankments for a week or two, sniff the smell of the Neva and the white nights, I would give up the rest of my

* See the discussion by Maurice Friedberg, "From Moscow to Jerusalem—and Points West," in the May 1978 COMMENTARY—ED.

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life for that happiness, I would agree to die straightaway." And that would not be an old man speaking, or an ex-philologist, but a twenty-eight-year-old doctor, well set up by Israeli standards.

If Zinik's story contains hatred of Israel, that does not mean that Zinik himself hates the country. We need not follow Soviet standards of "critical thought" and identify the work of art with life, or the author with his creation. But real, non-literary hatred is nevertheless not a rarity, or the exception. A Moscow painter, having lived three years in Jerusalem, and now leaving Israel to go live in New York, promises at parting: "Even if I die of hunger there, I'll write that everything is marvelous, just so as to make as many as possible leave here." A doctor from Leningrad, in Israel six months, which means he has hardly left the absorption center, has not had a whiff of life in the country, has learned nothing but what has come to him through émigré rumor, leaves for West Germany and writes to a friend, himself a "straighter" who has settled in France, "A curse on that fascist country." (It should be noted that for a Soviet, as indeed for a Westerner, "fascism" is not a concrete social and political concept but simply a curse word, a synonym for the extremely bad.) A Russian conversation, overheard in a Tel Aviv bus: "They've called me up for military service. So I've got to join *them!* What have *they* ever done for me, what do I owe *them,* why should I have to defend *them,* spill my blood for *them*!" But this was most likely just an ordinary man in the street, a simple soul. If it were an intellectual speaking, he would soon be expressing real anti-Semitism. Said as though joking, but really in deadly earnest: "It's true, what we used to say [i.e., in our intellectual milieu in Kiev, Moscow, or Leningrad], one cannot stand being surrounded only by Jews." Or perhaps even out loud: "Oh, these damned Yids! How I hate them!" It is hardly worth observing that the person who is so oppressed by his Jewish surroundings is himself a Jew, cursing the Yids, himself a Yid. Anybody closely familiar with former Soviet Jews can tell similar stories and name names. But these names will mean nothing to the reader, and anyway the problem is not one of individuals.

And so there is the third course, that of desperation, cynicism, frenzy, and above all hatred turned against the whole world, blind, all-embracing hatred. Of course it arises from disillusionment, from betrayed hopes often multiplied by an incorrect self-assessment, an unjustifiedly high opinion of one's merits and capabilities, and by envy of the more successful. In this sense, it is a universal phenomenon, not at all limited to former Soviet citizens. But the qualities of Soviet intellectuals in general and of Jewish intellectuals in particular serve as a good environment for this hatred to grow in. Considering the well-known Jewish will to live, may it not follow that the opposite drive, the desire for death and self-destruction which all living creatures harbor, must by the same token be especially intense in Jews?

The question does not imply hatred of the self as an individual so much as of oneself as a people, externalized self-hatred. In Russia, they say there are no worse anti-Semites than the Jews themselves, and perhaps Jews in other countries make the same observation. The malice of Jewish renegades, their tireless zeal and energy in the fight against their former co-religionists—all this is only too well known. If one can understand Pfefferkorn and Brafman, who wanted to detach themselves from their past and therefore slandered it, ascribing to the Jews all kinds of unknown and unheard of vices; and if one can understand the convert who will not allow a Jew into his house, won't give a Jew work, and doesn't want to hear anything about the Jews—then today one can understand the extreme leftists of Jewish origin who support terrorists and condemn Zionism and Israel, and who precisely reproduce the psychological collision which took place in the minds of neurotic apostates in earlier times. After all, it is possible to leave peacefully, without creating a scene and slamming doors. The same person, sure of himself and of his right to choose freely, will leave peacefully.

The great Hungarian poet, Miklos Radnoti, was born into a Jewish family but always felt alien to the Jews—not hostile, but simply alien. This man, who was in love with his Hungarian motherland, died in the labor battalions where the Hungarian Nazis sent their Jews—doomed to hard labor and death. They write about Radnoti a lot in Hungary today. Among the many who have written about him in their memoirs is the poet Istvan Vas, who was a friend of Radnoti in the last seven years of his life:

> If I try to recall what we talked mostly about, I remember only the Jewish question. My own point of view was this: if you were born a Jew, you had a choice. Either you said, "I want to be a Jew" or you said, "I don't want to be a Jew." Personally, I took the second choice. But it is quite impossible to say, "I am not a Jew." Yet that is precisely what Miklos said: let Hitler do as he likes, let the whole world turn upside down, still I am not a Jew. Miklos was right, at least as far as he was concerned, and he showed it with his martyr's death. Although they killed him as a Jew, he died as a non-Jew. His last lines were written not by a Jew, nor by an ex-Jew trying to free himself of his Jewishness. . . . He was the only one of my friends to whom I confided my conversion to Christianity. . . . He received the news with indifference and without any suspicion. He thought it natural: once I say I do not want to be a Jew, then I must confirm it. And I found his indifference quite natural: as long as he maintained his absurd position, saying he was not a Jew, then why should he become a Catholic? And I too felt no suspicion.

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The Radnoti case is an extreme one, where the mental state borders on the pathological, showing a total lack of sensitivity to the environment. At the opposite edge we find an extreme lack of self-assurance, the insatiable demand for new "reassurance," and this inner need becomes objectified in aggressive anti-Semitism.

THUS, the third course appears to result from the interplay of many factors and circumstances, some common to human nature and some common to the Jews, some specific to the Soviets and some specific to Soviet Jews. It is essential to have a clear understanding of these factors if we are to assess properly the statements of those who advocate this third course. And not only to assess, but to react. Let us take the loudest of such statements, a book by Ephraim Sevela called *Farewell, Israel!** It came out last year in French and English, and Radio Moscow broadcast excerpts from it in the original Russian. It received much greater publicity than any work by any other newly appearing misanthrope among the ex-Soviet Jews. This is because the others have been published in Russian in Israel itself or in émigré journals in the West, and the circle of readers is much narrower. Who, apart from a few Russian émigrés, has ever heard, for instance, of the former Odessaite, Sukonik, who lives somewhere in the U.S. and once a year publishes a short story or a little article in the Paris journals *Kontinent* or *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia*, or the New York paper *Novoe russkoe slovo*? All his malice and hatred of mankind are lost without trace, they simply fade away in the sand. Sevela's book, however, stirred up many Jews, and probably some non-Jews, too, in many countries.

Farewell, Israel! is a book about a great disillusionment. A hero of the Zionist movement for the free emigration of Jews from the USSR to Israel, a man of rare courage and selflessness, finds in Israel mendaciousness, greed, violence, inhuman exploitation of the Arabs, racism—in short, every conceivable abomination. Capitalist America seems to him another such abomination, cruel, hypocritical, egotistic, and so on, but the main thing is that the Jews there live on the verge of pogrom and destruction. Unfortunately, there was also abomination in the Soviet Union, where he suffered so much as a Jew and a fighter for freedom. And so he shakes the dust of Zionism from his feet and goes—nowhere. There is no peace for him on earth, or in heaven, as he does not believe in God. With his own hands he had smashed the happiness which his hard work had earned for him in the USSR, and he had done so because "the chief motive of his whole life had been to be honest." And it is this very motive which causes him to leave Israel, which is anyway condemned to death: the Jewish state will disappear from the map not later than 1985, and to remain there would mean to support the false Zionist myth and even to insult the memory of the holy idealists who sacrificed their lives to create and defend that state.

Reaction to Sevela's book says more about the mentality of those reacting than about the motives and aims of the writer. The Israelis shrug the whole thing off: let him jabber, he's not the first and he won't be the last. Some, however, are seriously upset by it: so that's what we mean to the Soviet Jews, whom we've been waiting for so impatiently; as far as they are concerned, we're no better than the Soviet Union, and if Sevela is anything to go by, we're a lot worse. Some Western Jews eavesdrop on this dialogue with some satisfaction: of course, Sevela's jeremiads are nothing new, but if it's impossible to settle in Israel, even with the Communist "paradise" behind one, that means we're doing the right thing to stay in the Diaspora; maybe he exaggerates, but much of what he says is sensible and accurate. Former Soviet Jews who have read the book are exasperated by the astonishing effrontery and monumental ignorance of their former compatriot, and condemn him for his brazen lying. For example, one of the "heroines" of his account, whom he knew back in Russia and who according to him has been subjected to persecution and humiliation in Israel for "her constant honesty and frankness," qualities which are "not to the taste of those in power," wrote to a Russian-language newspaper in Tel Aviv to declare that Sevela had distorted and falsified everything, even her name, and that a long time before she even had any idea of his "artistic plans" and his decision to leave Israel she had broken off relations with him because of his unbearable anti-Semitic utterances. Ex-Soviet Jews in Israel wonder who in fact paid for the book, and express their conviction that Sevela is a Soviet and/or Arab agent, receiving his payment in rubles and petrodollars. It is quite possible, but there's no proof, and unsubstantiated certitude works as an argument only in the USSR, not in free societies.

IN FACT, Sevela lies about Israel, and he lies so grossly that one should be provoked rather to laughter than to anger. He writes that nothing we see in Israel is "ours," it was all the result of the work of others. Israel, he claims, keeps no official statistics. He says (presumably on the basis of *un*official statistics) that in Israel there are 30,000 prostitutes. Israeli youth is indifferent to the fate of the country. Israel has set world records for robbery, cheating, embezzlement. And so on and so forth. Sevela also lies about the Soviet Union, and about Soviet Jews, and even about himself, all with the same ease and effortlessness. This outstanding and highly successful member of the Soviet film-making industry—so he describes himself—was in fact never renowned or famous; if

* See the review by Joshua Rubenstein in COMMENTARY, February 1978—ED.

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he was known to anyone, it was only to his professional colleagues, and that for combining a lack of talent with the ability to set himself up comfortably. His comedy, *The Baker's Dozen*, was regarded as the epitome of the banal in the cinema. It is a lie that the group with which he took part in a sit-down in the vestibule of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was the one which "punched the first hole" in the anti-emigration wall; the first to strike and to leave had done so in in the spring of the previous year, 1970. It is a lie that official anti-Semitism began in the USSR only after the creation of the state of Israel. Open state anti-Semitism in the USSR began with the war, and was Stalin's response to Nazi propaganda, which was proclaiming that in the USSR the Yids were in power everywhere, and that to defend Soviet power was the same as defending the Yids. By the end of the war, state anti-Semitism was fully formed, properly established.

Sevela also lies on details which might not be noticed by the non-Soviet eye, but which at once deprive the book of any veracity in the eyes of an émigré from the Soviet Union. Thus, militiamen wear dark-blue capes, whereas Sevela has them dressed in black, which is more frightening. The vestibule of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is situated on the corner of Marx and Kalinin boulevards, but Sevela transfers it to Red Square, a more effective location. Sevela reports that in 1948, at the age of twenty, he finished his university training and got his journalism diploma. But in order to get a university diploma one must study five years, which means that Sevela the prodigy would have finished high school at fifteen and entered the university at the height of the war; moreover, the first faculty in the USSR to issue journalism diplomas did not open in Moscow until 1947. The "cosmopolitan" campaign, Stalin's penultimate act of anti-Semitic persecution, began in February 1949; Sevela has it starting a year earlier, which it would have had to do to coincide with the first professional steps of our "diploma'd journalist." The director of the Moscow Yiddish Theater, Solomon Mikhoels, was murdered on January 13, 1948, but Sevela writes: "I remember that day perfectly. There was a cold early spring. A cold raw wind blew brick-dust across the sea of ruins. . . ." There is no end to these trivial lies. All the lying, trivial and gross alike, is of Soviet coinage: it is done with the certainty of impunity and very much with a purpose.

Certainly, Sevela's general fund of knowledge is rather shaky. He places Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria all in Africa. He makes Laszlo Raik a Jew. He has Hungary completely free of Jews in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. He mixes up Rudolf Slansky and Klement Gottwald, ascribing unlimited dictatorial power to Slansky. He packs off the Egyptian Jews "to the British Isles and other English-speaking countries," not having an inkling that the language of the emancipated Egyptian Jews was French. Even this trivial ignorance has the same origins as the lies—it is Soviet. A Soviet journalist or scriptwriter relies on his editors, on the "correction department"; if something is wrong, they'll put it right. Only political mistakes are dangerous; factual ones are trifles, nothing.

Sevela thinks in the Soviet manner, according to the norms of Soviet journalism, Soviet mass propaganda and mass culture. He doesn't like Israel; well, a lot of people don't, both Israelis and foreigners. But Sevela is completely dominated by Soviet patterns of thought, and so he must write that the multiparty system is a deception which conceals the power of the totalitarian state; that freedom of the press is also a deception, because there is only one Russian newspaper in the country, and in it criticism of the government is not permitted; that democracy is the same as anarchy, a call to violence, because the rule of the fist prevails everywhere, and is most clearly expressed in strikes and outright lack of discipline on the roads. All this is understandable. The soul of Soviet man craves order, iron discipline. The Stalinists "at home" are pining for the same thing, complaining that things have gone to pieces, everything's gotten out of hand.

He is boastful and vain in the Soviet manner. One is blinded by the number of times he writes "I discovered," "I understood," "I guessed." February 24, 1971, the day Sevela and twenty-three other Jews sat down in the vestibule of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was a great day in the history of the Jewish people. Sevela avers that he will never forget his conversation with Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, but what Kollek said is summed up in one phrase, while the instructive remarks of Sevela take up half a page. Not only is he superb himself, but so is everything that has any relation to him. For example, ". . . the East European Jews are the most wonderful Jews in all the world. . . .!" Even in military matters, he understands things a lot better than the regular officers; he foresees the inevitability of Israeli military catastrophe, and he remarks with satisfaction that the Yom Kippur War fully confirmed his worst presentiments and predictions.

The Soviet philosopher Alexander Zinoviev, no doubt the most consistent and pitiless critic of the entire Soviet system, writes in his book, *A Bright Future*, which has just appeared in the West: "Their [the dissidents'] intolerance, incompetence, conceit, and all the other qualities of Soviet man, make me sick. Our dissidents are made of the flesh and blood of Soviet society, they carry within them the features of that society in an abnormally enlarged form, in diseased caricature, though they are not aware of it." And this is true of Sevela, and of his companions. As for their other features, these derive from the neurosis of the apostate. Hatred, complaints, exposures, slander, the inability or unwillingness to enter a new life, pathological suspiciousness—it all comes

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from one identifiable source. For that reason one may assert that *Farewell Israel!* was written out of conscience, not only through Soviet-Arab generosity (if such existed) but also from the heart, in order to satisfy an inner need, a "burning heart" as they would have said in the last century. And that, perhaps, is more important and more alarming than any hypothetical venality on the part of the author.

POSTSCRIPT: In conclusion, and permitting myself a degree of subjectivity, I offer the speech I made on August 11, 1975 in Tel Aviv, at an evening to commemorate those killed on August 12, 1952, including—and, for me, above all—my father Peretz Markish. It expresses my own point of view on the topic of this essay.

"To honor the memory of martyrs sounds simple enough, but in fact it is an excruciatingly complex thing.

"Back there, in Moscow, or Kishinev, or Sverdlovsk, everything was much easier, however paradoxical that may seem. To honor and remember meant simply to hate, never to forgive, to sustain and build up one's will to get out. This, the will to get out, distinguished us from many generations of our fathers and grandfathers who, after a pogrom, having committed their martyrs to the earth or to the will of God, depending on the 'mercy' of the pogrom-makers, would run without thinking to bury the newly murdered in new places, or return to the old places, ruined and defiled, as soon as the master's rage had cooled and the blood on his hands had dried. They were not to blame for this, for they had no choice.

"But in today's circumstances, when Soviet Jewry has by some great miracle found the freedom of will and choice, he who chooses to leave commits an act which has moral as well as national value. For if a crime is committed, it is not only the criminal who is guilty, but in part his victim too: to submit to violence is in some degree to participate in it. I do not judge those who remain behind, I do not dare to judge, but I do assert that, in the general reckoning, from the point of view of eternity, if you like, theirs is a bad choice, which offends the memory of our martyrs.

"It also offends our national traditions. For good reason, thousands and thousands of times in the course of their lives, our forefathers remembered the Exodus from Egypt and repeated, 'We were slaves.' Were! But we will not be so again. So let us not be slaves! No longer will we make bricks for them, or tools and machines, or write books, invent, dance, and carve! I do not judge those who remain behind, but I do assert that getting out is a merit in itself, regardless of what comes after. It is a merit and an offering on the nameless graves of our martyrs.

"All this is elementary, almost banal. Hesitation, difficulties, and mistakes, all begin with the acquisition of freedom. This is because freedom is not only the greatest good, but also a great burden and a great temptation. Together with freedom we acquire moral responsibility, something unknown to the slave, and we lose the instinctive, unthinking bond of feeling and reaction. And that is quite understandable, as it is much easier to live in common hatred than in common love. And there are no longer any universal practices and universal decisions, and the feeling of universal duty gives way to individual concerns. This is not only inevitable, it is right, because the duty of the rebellious slave is something that was forced on him by the pitilessness of his master, whereas the duty of the free man grows freely out of the depths of his individuality, his character. We, yesterday's slaves, have no individuality, we have to make it grow and cultivate it, and that is very hard and there are bound to be mistakes.

"But in making mistakes and stumbling in our search, let us remember our martyrs, let us keep our gaze fixed on them, because our crude and irreparable errors are a desecration of their memory. Surely, we are here because they are not. The grief and shame are not only ours, but will be theirs, too, if we do not manage to burn out and destroy in ourselves the mean and venal and irresponsible creature that is Soviet man, if we remain the lost generation, lost to Israel and to free mankind."

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Foreign Aid for What?

P.T. Bauer and John O'Sullivan

"Do not attempt to do us any more good. Your good has done us too much harm already."
—SHEIK MUHAMMED ABDUH, an Egyptian in London, 1884

FOREIGN AID* is perhaps the only item of public expenditure in the West which is never criticized in principle. It is, of course, often said to be insufficient. *Past* aid programs too are sometimes denounced as inappropriate—in particular, aid which has financed obviously wasteful investment, or aid to oil-rich countries with a high per-capita income. But this criticism is itself merely the basis for advocating that aid should be directed to more appropriate targets as well as increased.

Nor is this advocacy confined to mere rhetoric. Of all forms of public expenditure, aid is the last to be cut in times of crisis, even when the crises are caused by balance-of-payments deficits to which aid contributes far more directly than, say, domestic welfare programs. And when aid has been cut *in extremis*, as in Britain during the unusually severe 1976 sterling crisis, those reductions have been the first to be made good.

In public discourse, those whose views reach the general public—with a few notorious exceptions—have an almost umbilical attachment to extensive and continuing aid. That aid is virtuous and desirable is no longer the conclusion of an argument; it is the starting point of *all* arguments, an axiom. The implications of this axiomatic status were crisply summarized in a 1972 editorial in the scientific journal, *Nature:* "If 1 per cent, in total, is the present target, what is wrong with 2 per cent?" And if 2 per cent, why not 4, or 8, or 16? For you can never have too much of a good thing.

But the validity of an axiom is independent of what occurs in the real world. Whatever happens in recipient countries can therefore be adduced to support maintenance or extension of aid. Progress is evidence of its efficacy and so an argument for its expansion; lack of progress is evidence that the dosage has been insufficient and must be increased. Some advocates argue that it would be inexpedient to deny aid to the speedy (those who advance); others, that it would be cruel to deny it to the needy (those who stagnate). Aid is thus like champagne: in success you deserve it, in failure you need it.

Accordingly, and with perfect logic, the terms "increase" and "improvement" are synonymous in aid discussions. Thus, according to an official OECD report in 1972: "In these GNP terms, the biggest *increases* were made by Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, France, with the United Kingdom also doing quite well. Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, and the United States also *improved* their performance . . ." (emphasis added).

So familiar are we with terminology in which giving more is unhesitatingly equated with doing better that we may not notice how perverse it is. It equates benefits with costs. Of course, benefits *may* accrue to someone. But we cannot simply assume that this is so. Nor can we assume that the beneficiaries, if any, will necessarily be the *peoples* in less developed countries (LDC's) rather than their governments. Still less can we take it for granted that their benefit will vary in line with our sacrifice. Yet we make this very assumption without realizing it when we equate greatly increased expenditures with improvement and a smaller increase with "doing quite well."

In short, if one starts from the axiom that aid is a good thing, not even an avalanche of evidence will produce any other conclusion. Yet to dispense altogether with arguments and evidence would amount to a social and intellectual solecism. Numerous rationalizations are therefore deployed. The most familiar are that aid is indispensable for development; that it is necessary for the relief of poverty; that it is an instrument for international

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*Throughout this article, all references to "aid" and to "foreign aid" are to official, government-to-government economic aid, whether bilateral or channeled through international organizations. Aid also includes the grant element in subsidized loans, debt cancellations, and certain kinds of international commodity schemes. We generally follow the common practice of referring to "aid" when the primary emphasis is on development or the relief of poverty, and to "wealth transfers" when it is on global redistribution or restitution.

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redistribution of income; that it represents restitution for past wrongs; and that it serves the political and economic interests of the donors. Aid advocates shuffle these arguments freely—primarily in response to the shifting demands of intellectual and political fashion. There were few appeals to the restitution argument in the 1950's, for example, when the West had not yet built a religion out of the White Man's Guilt.

DEVELOPMENT. It used to be argued in the early days of foreign aid that it was indispensable for the development of poor countries. Without aid, incomes would be too low to generate the capital required for investment and thus higher incomes. This argument was popularized as "the vicious circle of poverty."

Yet we know that *all* the present developed societies began poor and subsequently progressed without external aid. Large areas of what are now LDC's also progressed rapidly long before foreign aid—for instance, Southeast Asia, West Africa, and Latin America. Moreover, Western societies made great progress in the past under conditions far more difficult than those which face LDC's today. These latter can draw on vast external markets, on an abundant supply of capital, and on a wide range of technologies which were not available in the early stages of Western development. It is plainly not true that aid is indispensable for development.

A more sophisticated version of this argument holds that external subsidies are required because, without them, LDC's will run into balance-of-payments difficulties, supposedly inherent in the early stages of development. Professor Gunnar Myrdal, in his book *An International Economy*, argued that ". . . there must be something wrong with an underdeveloped country that does not have foreign-exchange difficulties." Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia, among others, then, are presumably guilty of succeeding in the face of the best professional opinion. And, of course, contrary to Professor Myrdal's prescription, all Western countries developed and enjoyed rapid economic progress without running up against payments deficits.

Might it be, however, that the West was able to advance without alms but that LDC's today cannot do so? There is just this much truth in the argument: namely, that economic achievement depends principally on people's attitudes, motivations, mores, and government policies. People in LDC's may place a high value on factors that obstruct material progress. They may be reluctant to take animal life, they may prefer the contemplative life over an active one, they may oppose paid work by women, or they may simply be fatalistic. If, on account of such factors, they are uncongenial to material progress, then external doles will not promote development. For if the conditions for development other than capital are present, the capital required will either be generated locally or be available commercially from abroad. If the required conditions are not present, aid will be ineffective and wasteful.

It might be argued in reply that aid, while not indispensable for progress, is nonetheless likely to accelerate what would otherwise be a very slow rate of development. This contention, which differs substantially from the vicious-circle-of-poverty argument, is inconclusive. Aid means at most that some capital is supplied more cheaply than if it had been obtained commercially. But in the context of development, this benefit is offset by at least two disadvantages. Capital supplied commercially has to be adjusted to market factors and to general local conditions much more closely than official gifts and loans (which can be, and often are, written off). It is therefore much more likely to be productive. And, as we shall see, aid inflows set up a whole host of unfavorable repercussions on the basic determinants of development.

POVERTY. To reduce poverty and distress is an irreproachable and unambiguous aim. That is perhaps one reason why this justification has come to loom large in aid propaganda. But there are certain moral and practical anomalies concealed here.

Aid to relieve poverty is not merely unconnected logically with aid as a spur to development; it is largely at variance with it. These two objectives differ in much the same way as alms to a beggar differ from scholarships to promising students, or assistance to an invalid from loans to establish young people in business. The poorest people in any society are unlikely to have, to the same extent as the better off, the aptitudes and motivations that encourage economic achievement. Aid based upon the criterion of poverty, therefore, will have little impact on the economic progress of the recipient society as a whole.

This confronts donors with a dilemma familiar to 19th-century social reformers. Are they simply to dispense aid and do nothing more? If so, they run the risk of transforming poor people into paupers permanently dependent on the dole. But the alternative is hardly more attractive. It is that donors should intervene extensively to instill in the recipient poor those qualities conducive to economic success.

In many Asian and African societies, such godlike intervention would require wholesale reform of local social institutions and cultural values and therefore large-scale coercion of the alleged beneficiaries. This stern necessity is recognized, indeed almost welcomed, by some of the more clear-sighted supporters of development aid like Professor Myrdal. In his vast tome, *Asian Drama* (1968), he specifies what would be required in India if "the government were really determined to change the prevailing attitudes and institutions and had the courage to take the necessary steps

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and accept their consequences." His proposed measures include the abolition of caste, a rational policy for husbandry, including the killing of cows, and "in general, enactment and enforcement, not only of fiscal, but also of all other obligations on people that are required for development."

But as Professor Myrdal tentatively admits elsewhere in the book, ". . . institutions can ordinarily be changed only by resort to what in the region is called compulsion—putting obligations on people and supporting them by force." Is such social upheaval justified by the aim of relieving poverty? And even if it is, would aid be accepted by the recipients if they understood the terms? And would such measures even relieve poverty—or would they intensify it, by transforming a living society into a dejected, inert, apathetic mass?

Perhaps it is fortunate that official aid in reality has little to do with the relief of poverty. It goes to governments and is spent by politicians and civil servants. Its allocation is inevitably influenced by their personal interests, and by the political objectives of the groups to which they belong. Is it surprising then that the beneficiaries of aid usually turn out to be those same politicians and civil servants, academics and businessmen close to them, and social groups which are connected to the government in some way, perhaps through tribal, family, or ideological links, or whose support is considered valuable? Only by rare accident are the poorest likely to come into any one of these categories. Indeed, the most indigent groups in the LDC's are largely outside the orbit of aid—for instance, aborigines, pygmies, and desert peoples. These groups contain many millions of people, but they are practically never mentioned in the literature.

Many of the schemes now being canvassed as an extension of Third World aid—commodity agreements covering primary products, for instance—can benefit the poor only haphazardly, if at all. Exporters of primary products are by no means always poor. Many developed countries are net exporters of primary products—as, of course, are the very rich OPEC countries. And quite apart from OPEC, primary producers are often the more prosperous LDC's—for instance, Malaysia, the Ivory Coast, Colombia, and Brazil. Within the exporting countries, moreover, it is the well-off, in particular established producers as well as politicians and administrators, who stand to benefit from commodity agreements.

If anything, the poor are likely to be harmed by such arrangements. They raise the price of necessities to poor people in both rich and poor countries. And to maintain prices, which is the *raison d'être* of such schemes, suppliers have to be restricted by excluding potential producers who are generally much poorer than those who benefit.

Finally, many governments receiving aid have pursued policies which have *reduced* per-capita incomes in their countries and aggravated the lot of the poorest. The expulsion of small traders from Zaire, for instance, had both these results. But if the criterion of the relief of poverty were to be applied uncritically, then such governments would qualify for more aid. Paradoxically this would encourage policies of impoverishment.*

REDISTRIBUTION. Since the UN General Assembly declared its support for a new international economic order in 1974, the redistribution of world income has become a leading aim of foreign aid. But this is a misleading phrase. When "world income" is "redistributed," what happens is that a proportion of incomes in developed countries is confiscated and handed over to the governments of recipient countries and the administrators of aid agencies.

Foreign aid is thus seen by many of its advocates as the natural extension of progressive taxation onto the international plane. Even the British humor magazine, *Punch*, traditionally known for its insular conservatism, wrote some years ago in an editorial: "In a sane world, the rich countries would be required to surrender a proper fraction of their productive resources to an international body charged with the duty of assisting the economic programs of the needy nations: progressive taxation at the international level."

But this is again misleading. Aid is a transaction between governments. Unlike progressive taxation, it cannot be even imperfectly adjusted to the personal and family circumstances of payers and recipients. Indeed, many people in donor countries are far poorer than many in recipient countries, especially those in recipient countries who actually benefit from aid. Hence, in the now familiar formulation, aid takes money from the poor in rich countries and gives it to the rich in poor countries.

Another argument for international "redistribution" is the need to contain an allegedly widening gap between the rich and poor countries. Yet the concept of such a widening gap is arbitrary, and the evidence for it nebulous. It is based on faulty statistics and comparisons which overlook differences of physical and social context.†

There is, however, one gap between the West and the Third World which is more significant and precise than the nebulous gap in living stand-

*For a fuller discussion of this point, see "Against the New Economic Order," by P.T. Bauer and B.S. Yamey, COMMENTARY, April 1977.

† Some doubts about the significance of the widening gap, especially as a ratio of incomes, have recently crept into the aid literature. According to a World Bank study, the average per-capita GNP of the collectivity of LDC's (excluding China) grew in recent decades at a faster rate than that of the collectivity of developed countries. *25 Years of Economic Development* 1950-75, by David Morawetz, World Bank, 1977, Chapter 2. See also, for a detailed analysis of the fallacies involved in the concept of a widening gap, "Against the New Economic Order," *op. cit.*

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ards. This is the difference in life expectancy between LDC's and the developed world. It declined sharply between 1950 and the early 70's. Life expectancy in LDC's rose from 35-40 years in 1950 to 52 years by 1970—an increase of between 30 and 50 per cent. By comparison, the developed-world increase was from 62-65 years to 71 years over the same period. This represents a fall in the ratio between the two aggregates from 1.7 to 1.3-1.4 and a decline in the absolute difference from about 26 to about 19 years.

Here then is a gap, relatively free from conceptual ambiguity, which has not widened but narrowed recently. And (as Macaulay insisted in his review of Southey's *Colloquies on Society*), "We might with some plausibility maintain that the people live longer because they are better fed, better lodged, better clothed, and better attended in sickness. . . ."

The idea of world redistribution is thus full of ambiguities and defects. At the same time, it inspires policies which are both futile and destructive. For policies of world redistribution are usually based on the tacit assumption that people's attitudes, motivations, and mores are essentially uniform and that, accordingly, differences in incomes and wealth are somehow abnormal results of accident or exploitation. Yet, as we have seen, these factors are the underlying causes of visible differences in incomes and living standards. Three clear conclusions follow. First, any serious attempt to realize international equality by wealth transfers would have a purely temporary effect. The underlying factors would soon reassert themselves to produce visible income differences. So the process would need to be repeated endlessly.

Secondly, once this was grasped and the leveling process extended to reduce the underlying differences, a wide-ranging and persistent coercion would be required. Just how much coercion might be needed would depend on the degree of standardization sought and the strength of a given people's attachment to their established customs. But the process of coercion would certainly have to include much heavier taxation on all Western countries; additional taxes on relatively prosperous groups in LDC's; and the ruthless uprooting of all customs and attitudes standing in the way of material progress. Obviously such a forcible remolding of both individuals and nations could not even be attempted by democratic national governments. Some international authority with near-totalitarian powers would be required.

Thirdly, unless a uniform ability to take advantage of economic opportunities were to be instilled into the various peoples of the earth, wealth transfers would reallocate resources from those who use them more productively to those who use them less so. This result would come on top of any disincentive effect, or other adverse repercussion, of the transfers in the West or the Third World. So the exercise is bound to reduce total world income.

RESTITUTION. When other arguments fail, appeals are addressed to the West's guilty conscience and foreign aid is urged as restitution for past wrongs inflicted on the Third World. In fact, some of the poorest Third World countries were never colonies. And such victims of colonialism as there were (people killed or maimed in colonial wars, tribal farmers dispossessed by colonists, slaves, etc.) are now dead and beyond the reach even of the World Bank.* Their descendants have gained greatly from being born into the modern colonial and post-colonial world rather than into the circumstances of pre-colonial Africa and Asia. Indeed, millions of people, who would otherwise have died, have survived because of Western techniques and ideas, notably medicine and public security, imported by colonial governments. Would the rest really have preferred a low life expectancy, continued poverty, disease, slavery, and incessant wars in order to retain undisturbed control of mineral resources they were unable to develop adequately?

Even if it could be established that colonialism was on balance harmful to the colonized, any theory of restitution would still fail because of the obvious impossibility of righting historical wrongs. What date would we fix after which crimes might be considered for compensation? Any choice would be arbitrary and therefore unjust. How would we identify the victims and the beneficiaries? Not, surely, on racial grounds alone with their primitive implication of collective guilt ("his blood be on us, and on our children"). And would all historical crimes be brought to book (Arab slave trading, pre-colonial wars of aggression in Asia and Africa), or only Western and colonial crimes? A statute of limitations on historical wrongs is more than just; it is unavoidable.

More often, however, it is not the past but the very existence of international income differences in the present which is denounced as a Western crime on the grounds that such differences necessarily reflect Western economic exploitation. Thus, in *Christianity Today*, an influential evangelical journal, Professor Ronald J. Sider wrote, under the heading "How We Oppress the Poor": "It would be wrong to suggest that 210 million Americans have sole responsibility for all the hunger and injustice in today's world. All the rich developed countries are directly involved. . . . We are participants in a system that dooms even more people to agony and death than the slave system did" (July 16, 1976). And Jill Tweedie, a prominent British journalist, wrote in the *Guardian* (London): ". . . a quarter of the world's population lives, *quite literally*, by killing the other three-quarters" (emphasis added).

* A more detailed account of the many absurd and false allegations against the West by those anxious to stimulate its considerable feelings of guilt will be found in "Western Guilt and Third World Poverty," by P.T. Bauer, COMMENTARY, January 1976.

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In recent years, such virulent allegations have become commonplace in the advocacy of wealth transfers. Yet they are absurd and unfounded, as can be seen from the single fact alone that in the Third World today the poorest nations are those with the fewest Western contacts, the richest those with the most extensive links. Conversely, some of the richest Western countries, notably Sweden and Switzerland, had until recently little economic contact with the Third World.

These baseless assertions of Western responsibility for poverty in the Third World have received some ostensible academic stiffening from the argument that the Third World has been held back by Western manipulation of the terms of trade. Yet even if it were true (which in point of fact it is not) that the terms of trade were unfavorable to LDC's or deteriorating, it would not follow that they are damaged by trading links with the West, merely that they do not derive quite as much benefit as they would under more favorable terms. They would be even worse off if there were no trade to have terms about.

SELF-INTEREST. Finally, there is the suggestion—frequently put forward by aid advocates with Machiavellian pretensions—that aid serves the political strategy of the donors and that it promotes exports.

Yet to serve Western interests, aid would need to have clear conditions attached to it, and to be adjusted to the conduct of the recipients. Such criteria have been notably absent from its operation. (Only recently the European Economic Commission assured the Marxist government of Angola that EEC aid would be free of political conditions.) Multinational aid, a large and increasing proportion of the total, is specifically supported on the grounds that it does not lend itself to arm-twisting or blackmail—a curious use of the concept in which it is the payers and not the recipients who engage in blackmail.

But in practice, Western interests are also largely ignored in bilateral aid. Many, possibly most, recipients of aid, especially in Asia and Africa, have confiscated Western enterprises and yet have continued to receive aid. Examples include Algeria, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zaire, and Zambia. The hostility of many aid recipients to Western donors and their friendliness toward the Soviet bloc are also a familiar feature of the international scene.

The anomalous and baffling absence of conditions to protect or promote the interest of the Western donors paradoxically arouses suspicion in the recipient countries. It suggests that aid is a covert attempt to buy influence, that it is only partial restitution for past wrongs, or that it is an instrument for dumping unsellable goods on the recipient countries. Such allegations are advanced even by aid recipients friendly to the West.

Very recently, it has come to be argued that aid could serve a wider political interest by promoting human rights in the recipient countries. In practice, however, expressions of concern about human rights are determined by the vagaries of political fashion and by the talents for propaganda of different groups. How else can we explain the absence of protest at, or even the explicit tolerance of, such large-scale brutality and inhumanity by aid recipients as the forcible sterilization of hundreds of thousands, probably millions, of people (predominantly the poorest) in India under Mrs. Gandhi, or the enforced herding of millions into collectivized villages in Tanzania, as well as massacres in Burundi, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania?

If a strict and disinterested criterion of human rights were to be applied to foreign-aid programs, there would be very little aid granted to LDC's: President Carter himself recognized this implicitly last year when he asked Congress to remove human-rights restrictions on U.S. funds for the World Bank. So much for aid as an instrument of human rights.

When addressing domestic politicians, labor leaders, and businessmen, advocates of aid often urge that aid promotes exports and employment. In its crudest form, the argument is that aid funds are used to buy exports, and thus sustain employment. But aid is taxpayers' money. It therefore reduces the domestic demand for other goods which the taxpayers would have bought if their taxes had been lower. To argue that aid helps domestic employment is like saying that a shopkeeper benefits from being robbed if the burglar spends part of the money in his shop. Direct subsidies to export industries would simplify the process. This method would also generate more employment, because less money would "leak" abroad—in the sense of not being spent on the exports of the donors—to the detriment both of employment and the balance of payments.

According to another version of this argument, aid benefits the donor economies and sustains employment by promoting the long-term development of the recipients. As we have seen, this argument prejudges the issue by assuming that aid is necessarily effective, which is doubtful at best. The argument also ignores the alternative and more productive use of aid funds in the donor countries and elsewhere. That such uses exist is suggested by the fact that aid programs and policies have to be financed from taxes. Were they as attractive as alternatives, they could be financed through the market. And there is also the difficulty aid recipients have in servicing even very soft loans, which indicates that much of the capital supplied has been wasted.

II

IF AID were like manna which simply descended from heaven, both costless and enriching everyone equally, producing no un-

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looked for and damaging consequences, then it could only be beneficial. But mundane aid is not at all like manna. It unleashes a host of repercussions, damaging to economic performance and development, which can easily outweigh the marginal effect of an inflow of subsidized resources.

Aid promotes the widespread politicization of life in the Third World. This is because it goes to governments, not to the people at large—a distinction obscured by conventional terminology which identifies a government with the people. Aid therefore necessarily increases the power, resources, and patronage of government in the society. This result is reinforced by preferential treatment of governments which try to establish state-controlled economies—a preference supported by the spurious argument that comprehensive state planning is necessary for material progress. In fact, economic controls introduced in the name of so-called development planning divorce output from consumer requirements and generally waste resources and obstruct their growth. These effects are particularly pronounced and damaging in poor countries where there are rarely enough trained and experienced administrators to fulfill the essential functions of government, let alone embark on sophisticated economic tasks which have baffled the British Treasury for thirty years. Indeed, an important economic effect of development planning is the waste of that scarce resource —administrative talent.

Aid also enables Third World governments to extend these economic controls and to manipulate them for purely political aims. Such controls—state monopolies in major sectors of the economy, including imports, exports, and the purchase of farm produce; ubiquitous state enterprises in trade, industry, banking, and transport; extensive licensing of economic activity; and special taxation of particular groups—serve to strengthen the grip of rulers over their populations, to reward or placate their supporters, to undermine their opponents, and even to confiscate their incomes and property. Mrs. Gandhi, during the Indian "emergency," was able to intimidate and suppress a great many political opponents, especially in the press and business world, without recourse to legislation or administrative measures of a nakedly repressive character. She simply manipulated long-standing economic controls, which had been granted to the government ostensibly for quite different purposes (e.g., import licenses and price controls), against them and their suppliers or customers. Such manipulation of economic controls is taken for granted in most of the Third World. It evokes resistance or criticism only if it leads to economic breakdown or if some victims are unexpectedly intractable or become visible, as, for instance, the Asians expelled from East Africa.

The beneficiaries are politically effective groups, especially politicians, but also the military, civil servants, and politically acceptable businessmen. The victims are such unpopular groups as landowners, small traders, or members of particular tribes like the Ibo in Nigeria. Large sections of the rural population are often severely harmed, sometimes directly, more often because measures against minorities disrupt the trading system on which their livelihood largely depends. Ethnic minorities are often the worst affected; in the Third World, economic controls are used widely and sometimes explicitly against the Indians in Burma, or against the Chinese in Malaysia.

In a politicized society, economic success or survival, and often even the physical survival of large numbers of people, come to depend on political developments and administrative decisions. This diverts the energies and activities of ambitious and resourceful men from economic life to politics, to the civil service and the politicized military—to the detriment of economic prosperity and progress. All this inevitably raises the political temperature and provokes acute political tension, especially in multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-tribal societies—that is, practically all LDC's.

What has all this to do with aid? Much state brutality and political instability would occur in any event. But in various ways, aid has encouraged or even made them possible. It has increased the stakes of political power. Are not well-rewarded and relatively secure political posts more attractive than striving after economic success that probably depends anyway on the arbitrary and uncertain will of politicians? Altogether, the flow of aid, the criteria of its allocation, and the dominant ideology of aid advocates and administrators, have served to further the politicization of life throughout the Third World, especially in Asia and Africa.

APART from promoting or helping along this disastrous politicization, aid has other adverse economic repercussions. It encourages restrictions on the inflow and deployment of private capital and enterprise. Such restrictions are imposed by most aid recipients—an evident anomaly, as a shortage of capital is the avowed ground for aid. But this anomaly becomes readily understandable when it is recognized that, whatever they say about development or equality, the prime purpose of most aid-recipient governments is to strengthen their hold over the societies they rule.

Aid also often supports projects so wasteful that they not only incur losses year after year, but absorb more domestic resources than the value of their output. Yet they are continued for such political reasons as the reluctance of the government to lose prestige at home, or contacts with the donors, especially when these are politically congenial, or a desire to appear technologically up-to-date. To mention but one of many examples, some years ago Tanzania received bush-clearing equipment under a Yugoslavian aid scheme. This was

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designed for use in temperate climates. Much labor and scarce water were necessary for cooling to keep it going somehow in the tropics. It was only after protracted pressure from external advisers that the Tanzanian government agreed to abandon the equipment.

Aid often biases social and economic policies toward inappropriate Western models. In many Asian and African countries Western-style universities have been financed with aid when there is neither adequate personnel to staff them nor suitable jobs for their graduates who become a discontented intellectual proletariat. Western-inspired trade unions are another instance of inappropriate external models in aid-recipient LDC's: if they are effective, they inflate costs and thus impair both competitiveness and local employment opportunities. But the most familiar and most inappropriate external prototypes are prestige industries and activities such as engineering complexes, steel works, and airlines. Even Laos and Ethiopia have, or at least had, their own national airlines (operated for them by foreign airlines who supply personnel, organization, and equipment).

Aid also encourages balance-of-payment crises because these can be used as a ground for demanding more aid. If a deficit occurs in the course of development planning, it may even be regarded by people like Gunnar Myrdal as the outcome of laudable efforts. Not unnaturally, this encourages Third World governments to pursue inflationary policies, to run down their exchange reserves, and to generate payments deficits. These in turn inhibit private saving and investment and encourage the flight of capital. Both the policies and their consequences justify the imposition of further economic controls and create an atmosphere of crisis. All of which stimulates requests for more aid—and so on *ad infinitum*.

Major psychological repercussions of aid also deserve notice. Aid encourages the delusion that a society can progress from indigence to prosperity without the intermediate stage of economic effort and achievement. Insistence on the need for external donations obscures the necessity for the people of poor countries themselves to develop the faculties and attitudes and to adopt the conduct and the mores required for sustained material progress —if this is what they wish to do. (Of course, they may reasonably prefer to remain poor and to hold on to their traditional ways.) Aid also subtly confirms and perpetuates ideas and modes of conduct which obstruct economic development—notably the idea that an improvement in one's fortunes depends on other people, the state, the rich, one's superiors, local rulers, or foreigners.

Some observers have emphasized the profoundly disturbing effects of the sudden impact of Western contact in LDC's. Official aid is much more likely than commercial contacts to produce such effects. Whereas the success of those who stake their own resources depends on estimating correctly the appropriate local conditions, those who direct taxpayers' funds from far away are under no such constraint. Hence the British government's celebrated East African groundnut scheme of 1947-50, in which huge sums were spent with virtually no regard to local conditions and which finally produced no groundnuts at all. By contrast, those who invest or work in LDC's often have to recognize not only local resources and mores, but local customs, susceptibilities, and hierarchies as well.

Moreover, the disturbing effect of Western commerce is partial, gradual, tentative, and almost casual, as against the sudden and coercive modernization of traditional society so often associated with foreign aid. Thrust between two cultures, neither directed by traditional customs nor inspired by Western incentives, the people in aid-recipient countries are probably less able to take advantage of economic opportunities than they were before.

III

How did it happen, then, that such a far-reaching and momentous policy was advanced on the slender basis of negligible rationalizations; that it was nonetheless supported by public men and prominent academics with a notable lack of caution or skepticism; and that, despite plentiful evidence of its perverse and harmful consequences, it finally achieved the status of an undeniable axiom?

"In the beginning was the word." The concept of a less developed world, eventually to become the Third World, was forged after World War II, largely under U.S. auspices, to denote the whole of Asia other than Japan; Africa, except occasionally South Africa and Rhodesia; and Latin America. The less developed world or Third World is thus in effect the whole world outside the West and Japan, and it includes some two-thirds of mankind.*

But "the word" was less a description of reality than an attempt to change it. Phrases like "the less developed world" served to provide a spurious veneer of unity to a vast aggregate of radically different, deeply divided, and often mutually antagonistic or bitterly hostile components. What is there in common between, say, Papua New Guinea and Algeria, or between Malaysia and Argentina, or between Thailand and Botswana, or between Sri Lanka and Ecuador, or between Chad and Peru? In most LDC's even today, the majority of people do not even know of the existence of other less developed countries, let alone feel a

*The treatment of the oil states and of the Communist countries is often ambiguous. Until 1973 the oil states were invariably classified as less developed countries even though some already had very high per-capita incomes. In political discourse they are still often included in the Third World. The position of the Soviet bloc is apt to be left undefined. Such practice illustrates the political nature of the division of the world into developed countries and less developed countries, or the West and the Third World.

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common solidarity. Some are in a state of uneasy truce with their neighbors, as for instance India and Pakistan, as well as many African states. Others, like Algeria and Morocco, are in a state of intermittent hostilities; yet others are engaged in deadly combat, as are Ethiopia and Somalia.

In one respect only are these various countries at all united—in distinction to and, as time has progressed, in *opposition* to the West (from which they nevertheless demand and receive aid). But this invented and theoretical unity has served an important practical purpose. For Third World governments, and agencies, and certain groups within the West, it has become a source of ideological and even financial advantage.

Ideologically, the invention of the Third World both reflects and promotes the radical-equalitarian belief that economic and social differences perform no useful function and are therefore abnormal and reprehensible. By this standard the West stands condemned both for its internal arrangements, which permit of such differences, and also because it is more prosperous than most of the Third World. Removing resources from or otherwise undermining the position of this corrupt metropolis thus becomes an instrument for promoting international equality, reducing the power of the West, and encouraging state-controlled economies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

In giving practical effect to these ideas, international organizations, notably the UN and its affiliates, have been a major force. Prominent staff members within these bodies—occupying highly paid and prestigious positions—have discarded even the appearance of neutrality to become, in effect, union organizers for the Third World. Thus, Dr. Mahbub ul Haq, director of the Policy Planning Department of the World Bank, an influential speech writer for Robert McNamara, wrote in his book, *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World*:

> A major part of the bargaining strength of the Third World lies in its political unity. This unity is going to be even more important in the struggle ahead. One of the essential tactics of the Third World should be to proceed through the process of collective bargaining so that whatever bargaining strength its individual members possess is pooled together.

Such distinguished *apparatchiks* have done much to popularize the idea of a homogeneous less developed world with a common interest, and to organize concerted action by the most diverse countries against the West.*

Social scientists and academic economists form another pressure group which advocates—and benefits from—official aid. Before World War II, indeed, development economics did not exist as a well-defined academic subject. It owes its birth very largely to the emergence of foreign aid, which led to a proliferation of posts in universities and foundations. Those who toil in the vineyard of development economics can aspire to well-paid and prestigious posts with aid agencies and international bodies or in organizations supported by them.

But there are more subtle advantages to be gained from the extension of aid. For if we try to see the world as aid advocates would wish us to do, it appears to be divided into two sharply distinct categories. The one category is represented by the people of the Third World, sunk in poverty, helpless and at the mercy of their environment, exploited by the West, caught in a vicious circle of poverty, unable to control their own fertility, devoid of will and with little capacity for individual action. In short, they are like paupers or children. On the other side of a vast gulf are the prosperous people in the West, partly conditioned by their environment but with a will of their own, active but villainous, responsible for the plight of the world's poor, but refusing to take the actions required to improve it.

There is no doubt which is the superior in this scenario. We emerged from poverty; they cannot. Their poverty is the result of our past exploitation; their chance of a better future rests with us. Whatever happens to the people of the Third World is determined by us. In short, what poses as compassion comprises much condescension. And this condescension readily leads to coercion by enlightened guardians who will act in everyone's best long-term interests. Thus, writes Dr. ul Haq (Kings College, Cambridge; Yale; Pakistan Planning Commission; the World Bank):

> The Third World can help its cause a great deal by establishing a substantive secretariat to serve the needs of its own forums . . . . manned by the best people from the Third World and its main task should be to produce well-researched, well-documented, specific proposals which harmonize the political and economic interests of the Third World.

Can anyone doubt that the "best people" will be drawn from such institutions as Cambridge, Yale, the Pakistan Planning Commission, the World Bank, and their surrogates in the Third World? And is it therefore any wonder that such people are fervent believers in aid and in the kind of future it contributes to creating?

*Note, incidentally, one pertinent aspect of aid. From its earliest days to the present global egalitarianism, Western countries have largely financed the spokesmen who assail them, the organizations which shelter these spokesmen, and the platforms for their attacks.

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New York's Crisis—and Washington's

Roger Starr

ONLY a few months ago—on July 1, precisely—New York's city government was able to announce that it had almost $1 billion in the bank *after* having paid off the last of its seasonal borrowings from the United States Treasury. This good news had been preceded by the passage, but not yet the implementation, of a new and more generous federal-aid bill which would ultimately guarantee long-term city bonds expected to encourage a total of $4.5 billion in new financing. Further, economic soothsayers, gazing into the murky depths of their statistics on employment and trade, were reporting signs of an upward turn in the ability of the city's people to produce wealth. Flushed with these happy auguries, President Carter journeyed to New York to sign the new federal-aid bill on the steps of City Hall, and to celebrate with Mayor Koch the end of the fiscal crisis.

For the occasion, a desk once used by George Washington was trundled out onto the steps. There, in front of Governor Carey and a goodly company, Koch and Carter, the heads of two governments very different in size but similar in their inability to balance their budgets, conducted their ceremony. It marked the triumph and culmination of an effort to persuade Congress to take the unprecedented step of guaranteeing a municipality's general obligations. And the two principals generously paid tribute to the ingenious and tireless people who had devised schemes enabling an all but bankrupt city to refund $5 billion in short-term notes without having to run for the sheltering arms of federal judges.

Ultimately the sun went down; the crowd dispersed; Washington's desk disappeared inside the building. The media people folded their notebooks and tripods. And yet if the celebration was over, the crisis whose end it had been called to mark most assuredly was not; and soon it was making its persistence known.

In September, the city comptroller was talking about difficulty in meeting the end-of-the-month payroll. Ultimately it was met in part from real-estate taxes, paid ahead of schedule by large real-estate owners who were given a substantial discount in compensation. More ominous, but less noticed, were signs that the city's budget balance for the year that began on July 1 was slipping rather badly. The four-year financial plan that the city had prepared to go with its federal-aid program acknowledged that each of its last three years would result in a deficit which it proposed to cover from a list of possible actions to be chosen later. But if the balanced budget for the first year were to go askew, all the subsequent deficits would become larger and harder to manage. The current slippage resulted from factors over which the city had little or no control: a reduction in the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) grants, through which the federal government had been paying for a number of municipal services throughout the country; the reluctance of Congress to renew its "contracyclical" assistance to cities in trouble, presaging a loss this year of about $105 million to New York; and a rise in the calculated cost of the 1978 labor settlement, so intricate and complex in its application that experts disagreed over the dollars involved.

These developments—unlike those related to bridging the embarrassing time gap between the city's need for cash and the arrival of tax money and other revenues—go to the heart of New York's problem. If New York cannot balance its budget, it will not be able to cover its debt payments; if it cannot cover them, the federal government will have to make good on the limited guarantees it has just authorized. But after that there will be no more special help for New York. This was a principle firmly emphasized by members of Congress during consideration of the aid bill, and just as firmly promised by the spokesmen for New York. Thus we come back to the question of whether New York can continue to sustain a government providing the services now provided, and if not, what the consequences will be.

To many serious observers, however, news of the budget slippage, though disconcerting, was by no means the last word on the city's vitality. They pointed out that municipal tax revenues, as well

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as expenses, depend on the state of the city's economy, and that for the first time in years New York's economy was beginning to breathe easier. These observers noted that in Manhattan, the city's crucial central business district, the renting of expensive space on the most desirable thoroughfares had picked up dramatically. Prices were far higher than would have seemed possible only two years ago. Strong demand had developed, too, for luxury housing in Manhattan. The purchase prices of cooperative apartments were soaring. Wealthy foreigners to whom, allegedly, New York's streets seem as safe as Disneyland's, swelled the ranks of would-be buyers. Another phalanx of invaders, armed with checkbooks and local bank credit, had come marching over the bridges from Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.

In addition to all this, the optimists could point to a demand for housing which had stimulated the conversion of raggedy, largely unusable factory buildings in Manhattan's obscure industrial sections into useful and safe apartments, initially for artists, but now open to anyone who could pay. That city residents could find use for obsolete structures promised a solidification of New York's real-property tax base; that the city could retain within its borders households with the money to move elsewhere presaged well for its economy. So too with the phenomenon of young couples, primarily with professional backgrounds, investing in the purchase and rehabilitation of older one-family homes for their own use.

Other signs of economic revival: the State Labor Department reported 7,000 more payroll jobs in the city in June 1978 than there had been in June 1977, a gain of 2/10 of 1 per cent. (True, the city had been losing jobs for ten years at an annual rate of 2 per cent, ten times greater than the last year's rate of gain, but at least the loss had not grown.) In the same period, too, unemployment dipped from more than 9 to 8 per cent. Retail sales in the city increased by about $60 million between April and June of this year, outpacing the increase in the consumer price index. The Broadway season was spectacularly successful during the winter of 1977-78, a good sign for the city's tourism. Hotels were full, and more were being built or remodeled at great expense. Most encouraging of all, the Department of Social Services reported that in September 1978 the welfare rolls contained only 900,000 names, the lowest total in ten years.

THESE statistical indices of a healthier economy can be confirmed visually, particularly by those whose prospect of New York City is limited to central Manhattan, and especially its East Side. The midtown streets are jammed; plazas that abut new office buildings are thronged with young people at lunch time; they seem able—ingeniously or miraculously—to afford a share of Manhattan's sophisticated and expensive bounties, though in payment they lunch on hot dogs in the open air, weather permitting. And, at a glance, they represent, in fair proportion, all of New York's racial groups and sexes. On every hand, new restaurants are opening, new boutiques appear, and Rollses and Mercedeses are as numerous as bicycles.

Unfortunately, there are two major troubles with the happy picture. The first is that this good news, even if it were to continue, would be far too slow in producing income for the city government. The budget deficits for the next four years (including the one which started July 1, 1978) could not possibly be closed by a projection of these improving trends over the same period. A 5 per-cent decline in welfare would reduce the city's present $1 billion-a-year expenditure by only $50 million a year; not peanuts, surely, but not nearly enough to eliminate the estimated gaps, even if the drop could in confidence be expected to continue. New York's past concern with social values leads to the prediction that as the number of welfare recipients declines, the pressure to increase benefits for those remaining will grow. And the connection between the other improving trends and municipal revenues is even less close—indeed, much of the new construction to which the optimists point has been stimulated by immense local tax concessions.

The second major trouble with optimism on the basis of these observations is that they tend only to support the hope that a thriving headquarters / cultural-center / tourism / professional-service city is rising in the center of what is now New York. Perhaps it will continue to rise. But such a city will not be able to employ a population equivalent to those who once worked in New York's industrial areas and on its piers, docks, and freight railroads. The headquarters city—to shorten the prolix description—will of course require a small army of service workers who need not demonstrate office or professional skills. But it appears unlikely that the wealth produced by the headquarters industries could yield enough government revenue to support, with present services and benefits, the larger number of people now living in New York boundaries who will not be usable in headquarters jobs. Thus, for some years to come, the emerging headquarters city will have to be relieved of many of the present burdens of New York's past. Otherwise, the national government will have to assume the costs of carrying those burdens on an even greater scale than it already has.

Such, at least, are the arguments of those who are persuaded that just as the present population of New York exceeds its ability to create wealth, so the present upward trends in its economy cannot be matched to its need for funds.

SANGUINE observers look to the heartening bustle

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of central Manhattan for visible support of their theory; so gloomier analysts look to other parts of Manhattan, and to the other boroughs, for confirmation of their pessimism. The Lower East Side of Manhattan, dotted now with burned-out and abandoned buildings, is far less crowded than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, but even shabbier. Its land, furthermore, is generally worth fewer dollars today (perhaps no more than one-quarter as many) than it was worth in the 1870's, when immigrants poured into the city. Conditions are hardly better in Harlem, many of whose middle-class citizens are now leaving, resettling in outlying single-family-home neighborhoods or in the suburbs. Large sections of the Bronx have been almost entirely burned out, though some families continue to hang on in even the most depressing-looking sections. Formerly prosperous neighborhoods like the Grand Concourse are, in fact, rotting from the inside out; rent control discouraged the owners of apartment houses from putting new capital in the buildings, and while the resulting low rents encouraged their tenants to stay on amid the deterioration, the time inevitably came when personal danger seemed more decisive than a modest rent.

Pessimists also find their attitude confirmed by what they see beneath the physical structures on the land. Below the Grand Concourse, for example, runs a subway line, built on the supposition that it would carry garment workers from their Bronx apartments to their Seventh Avenue jobs. The jobs have gone; as a result, the subway system as a whole has lost a million riders a day. Operating costs have soared. The city remains obligated to pay the interest on debts incurred in the course of buying or building the lines, maintaining them, and replacing their rolling stock. Although fewer trains are provided now on some subway lines because of the revenue crunch, any saving is lost in the morass of fixed charges.

Alongside the subway, sewer and water pipes represent a precious but wasting asset in which millions were originally invested: maintenance schedules have been stretched to the point of absurdity (a 199-year cycle for some pipe systems and the roads above them) because the city government chose to spend money on other projects that more immediately affect the lives of people in need. But in the long run, neglect of the city's physical plant—the roads and water-transportation systems, the bridges and subways—menaces human welfare just as certainly.

Making choices between "hard" assets—to strengthen and secure money that has already been spent on structures and "things"—and investment in "soft" assets—people, their comfort and training—is not easy. The city has opted for "soft" programs, but the debts incurred to build its "hard" structures remain to be paid. And the city's new financial plan must include large additional sums to keep these neglected hard structures from collapse.

Finally, the pessimist glimpses the city's immense staff, now protected in its tenure by civil-service law and union contract. Perhaps even more significant is the political protection of public resistance to service cuts, even while the same public decries waste and extravagance. A headquarters city with a smaller working population than that of the New York which had 600,000 more manufacturing jobs would surely be able to support only a smaller municipal staff. But it is very difficult to see how the force can be reduced below the present 300,000 level. Substantial cuts, amounting to about 60,000, have been made since the onset of the fiscal crisis, but further cuts have been opposed vigorously by the same labor unions whose pension-fund trustees must authorize loans to the city if the financial plan for the next four years is to be followed. The unions object less strenuously to a reduction by attrition, but their meekness on this subject is perhaps traceable to their belief that attrition cannot work. They reason—probably correctly—that since attrition depends on voluntary departure from the work force—people leaving city employment for their own reasons—some of these will inevitably have to be replaced to keep the rest going at reasonable efficiency.

So the city of New York, having persuaded the administration and Congress that it should be supported by the new loan guarantees, appears to face great problems in adjusting to the future. Even optimistic forecasts of the city's central business economy leave it short of putting its present population to work. Cutbacks in its physical facilities will not lighten the heavy burden of debt incurred in building them. Its maintenance programs require immense new investment. Its web of public services cannot be reduced without major changes in its way of life. Cutting its present employment levels will be extremely difficult.

To all of this, the optimists have a simple rebuttal: things were bad in the past as well and yet New York managed to thrive, and its response to the sudden crisis that hit it three years ago has shown that the city can thrive again.

II

THERE was, however, nothing really sudden about the onset of New York's fiscal crisis in 1975, nor anything truly mysterious about how the city thrived before. Up to 1930 it thrived because it provided limited services, using employees who were paid wages that were lower than the comparable standards in private employment. It survived the postwar decline in industrial activity, expansion of services, and higher wages for employees by concealing, even

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from itself, that its budget was never truly balanced.

It is possible to pore over the annual report issued by the comptroller of the city for each year since the end of World War II without learning until the 1974 report that the city's income had never covered its expenses. Each year's report, solemnly signed by the elected comptroller, and kept in full conformity with the laws, shows income and expenses to be almost precisely balanced. Fiscal authorities—including the present comptroller—who have studied the city's accounts since the crisis started, have now concluded that New York's cumulative deficit stood at $5.1 billion on June 30, 1975. The figure is in a sense arbitrary; its precision makes it appear that the examiners are all-wise in determining the difference between a capital investment and an operating cost, or can determine the real value of a mortgage—of which the city owns hundreds—covering the costs of constructing or rehabilitating an apartment house. In any case, using consistent rules, the accountants have decided that the city's deficit increased by another $3 billion between then and July 1, 1977.

In simple terms, New York got into trouble as Mr. Micawber said anyone might: it spent more than it earned. It thrived for years by borrowing the difference from the banks, the public, and the pension funds of its employees. In every one but three years between 1960 and 1975, its bonded debt was greater at the end of the year than at the beginning. After the world came to recognize the city's budgetary imbalance in 1975, it survived by borrowing still more. Uncounted in the chronicle of its deficits is about $3 billion which represents the money it, in a sense, has borrowed from the pension funds without their knowing it: by paying in less money than it should to put those funds on an actuarially sound basis.

The next question, of course, is how, with a series of balanced budgets, the city could pile up a deficit of $8 billion (not counting the pension underfunding, but taking into account a two-year lag in even the present level of pension payments). There are two answers. The city (unintentionally) overestimated its income. It also underestimated its expenditures by calling them investments.

Overestimating income was easy. Each year's budget must be based on a projection of taxes the city expects to receive, but in the 1970's, unanticipated delinquencies in real-estate taxes rose sharply. Similarly, it was—and remains—easy for the city to overestimate the revenues it is entitled to receive from Albany and Washington. Only a relatively small part of the money contributed by the state and national governments to the city can be precisely determined in advance; the rest of the money is conditional on the performance of certain acts, or the accomplishment of certain qualifying payments by the city in support of the joint aims which the programs are intended to foster: public assistance, education, health care, manpower training—the list is very long. Frequently, the city in good faith believes it will qualify for intergovernmental payments which, later on, it finds disapproved by the governments involved. Or there is a dispute between the city and other governments over the meaning of a law. Or auditors going over the books refuse to accept the documentation of the city's expenditures.

The city also imprudently overestimated the proceeds of future bond sales. Once again, the basic notion of selling short-term notes to finance the construction of a building or a road is intelligent: it prevents the borrower from overselling long-term bonds to raise money for a capital investment which may, in the end, cost less than anticipated. These bond-anticipation notes were particularly attractive to city officials for use in the Mitchell-Lama middle-income housing program because, on top of everything else, they minimized the debt service which the tenants of such projects had to pay to the city. Many Mitchell-Lama projects were financed with bond-anticipation notes in the expectation that when the time was right, permanent long-term bonds would be sold and the proceeds used to repay the temporary financing. When the crisis came in 1975, and no one would buy city bonds, the city was stuck with nearly $1.4 billion in housing bond-anticipation notes, due within a few months, that could not possibly be replaced with city long-term bonds, or extended on any terms whatsoever.

THE city's underestimating of its expenditures involves a more sophisticated and complex form of reasoning. In ordinary corporate accounting, a difference is drawn between operating expenses and capital investments. If an electric utility company buys coal, and burns it to create steam that generates electricity, it charges the cost of the coal actually burned in any year against the revenues it receives from its customers. If, however, in the same year it builds a power station, it charges against its income only the amount that its accountants believe (and the regulatory commissions accept) to be the depreciation of the plant's value due to its aging one year. Of course the purpose of making the investment in the plant is to increase the ability of the utility company to produce electricity for which its customers must pay.

The national government, in its basic accounting, does not make this same distinction between operating expenses and capital investments. If the navy buys an atomic-powered aircraft carrier, the cost is charged to the year or years in which the money is appropriated to pay for it. But big-city government, lacking the credit rating and the money-creating powers of the federal govern-

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ment, could scarcely afford to build any major capital improvements if it had to pay for them completely out of tax revenues in the years of their construction. New York State recognizes this in its constitution and permits cities to borrow for their capital expenses, paying the cost out over the long-term use of the improvement. New York City is allowed to borrow up to 10 per cent of the adjusted value of its real estate for capital improvements, and there are certain categories for which the city can borrow without limit—for example, sewage-treatment plants and self-liquidating projects in general.

This is not unreasonable but it overlooks two basic facts. First, the interest on the repayment of these bonds become annual expenses of the city government, but the improvements rarely contribute, as does a new power plant in the case of a utility, to the ability of the city to earn revenue. Indeed, most capital investments—like schools, parks, swimming pools—increase the municipality's operating costs because they require staff to run them. Second, as a city ages, its physical plant tends to deteriorate, just as an industrial plant does. But no political credit generally attaches to a city official for maintaining an old building well; his pay-off—in political kudos—comes from new construction with his name on the billboard in front of it. Thus, the capital-budget system, which sets forth how much the city can spend for major, long-term improvements, tends to be heavy on new structures, light on necessary reconstruction of existing facilities.

But since the capital budget merely limits the total indebtedness that can be outstanding, and does not precisely define what is considered a capital improvement, New York's mayors have found capitalizing expenses and taking them out of the expense budget an easy way to lower the apparent expenses of government during a specific fiscal year. Mayor Robert Wagner did this with operating expenses which were connected with capital structures—painting government buildings, for example. His successors expanded the practice until, in 1975, at least a billion dollars in operating costs were classified as one-time capital investments and removed from the annual budget. That budget, of course, already contained a provision for the debt service on all the earlier borrowings that paid for recurring operating expenses misclassified as capital investments.

Such a system of overestimating revenues and underestimating costs could go on, but not forever. Nothing the city did in the first two months of 1975 was grossly worse than what it had done previously, but the numbers were growing like weeds. In 1964 the city's temporary debt at year's end was only $316 million. At the end of fiscal 1975 it stood at $4.54 billion, a 1300 per-cent increase. Of course, inflation of incomes had increased the number of investors in the nation who wanted tax-exempt notes; New York was their biggest supplier. If the temper of the times had remained propitious, New York's refinancing of a steadily increasing load of temporary debt might have continued for years. But in 1974 interest rates reached unheard-of levels, recession was at hand, there was a temporary default on the notes of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, and when the city tried to sell some of its own notes in March, its own bond counsel refused to certify the accuracy of its accounting information. Nobody would buy the notes. With $4.5 billion in such notes due in the next twelve months or less, the city faced default and an inevitable bankruptcy, an eventuality for which no political leader had prepared the electorate.

Claiming that the city's general assets were adequate to pay the notes but were badly frozen, city officials called the crisis a "cash-flow" problem. All the principal participants in the crisis—city and state officials, bankers, union leaders, and the members of Congress—had a natural interest in propagating this narrow definition of the city's position. The bankers would not be asked why they had sold questionable obligations to their customers. Government officials would be spared the career-blighting ignominy of presiding over the bankruptcy of the nation's largest city, after having issued no warning of its imminence. For the labor leaders, defining the crisis as a cash-flow problem protected the wage levels of their members and defended them against catastrophic firings. Men of conscience, who by no means exclude the other categories, were terrified of a bankruptcy involving so large a government, one that provides health and welfare services, transportation, education, police and fire protection for a population of over 7 million, services which cannot be interrupted without immense risk, and for which bankruptcy procedures would be most difficult to work out.

The state government therefore had to find a way to segregate enough of New York's revenues to protect those who would lend it $4.5 billion in long-term money, with which the temporary notes could be paid off. It established the Municipal Assistance Corporation and ultimately assigned to it the city's sales and other business taxes. This stream of tax revenue was enough to support a large public borrowing while the city's employee pension funds were persuaded to buy both city bonds and the corporation's long-term securities. The state loaned the city $800 million, secured by a lien on the aid payments that it would make in the year following, and then made another loan against the security—far below face value—of the city's mortgages on its Mitchell-Lama housing projects.

By now it was perfectly clear that the financing

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would be needed not only to cover the maturing temporary notes, but the additional operating deficits which the city would inevitably run up until it could get its budget balanced. As we have noted, this came to an additional $3 billion. The state passed a law which permitted the city to phase out its capitalized operating expenses over a long period of years—these cash deficits would presumably be covered by selling the city's own paper when that became marketable. Mayor Koch had announced his plan to end this practice sooner. But the total of all these devices was too small to give the city the money it needed, and the federal government was then persuaded to make its two-and-a-half year arrangement for seasonal borrowings.

THE sole purpose of all these ingenious arrangements—grossly simplified in this summary—was to permit the city to come to a time when it could maintain a balanced budget over the years. No one seems ready to admit that, from this perspective, the effort has failed. Even if it is possible to restore the balance of the current year's budget under the terms of state law, it remains at least $690 million in deficit under generally accepted accounting rules. Next year's budget is projected with a deficit under those same rules—and with the highly dubious assumption that the city's other than personal expenses will not go up, and that wages and salaries will be fixed at their present level—of $882 million ($472 million under state law).

Furthermore, Deputy Comptroller Sidney Schwartz has officially called attention to uncertainties in other city assumptions that, he says, may increase the gaps still further. At the end of September, he estimated the "possible" deficit for fiscal 1982—the final year of the federal aid program—as $1.2 billion, without taking into account a general wage increase for city workers whose contracts expire before then.

If one overlooks the comptroller's cautionary words, one can content oneself with the city's own guess of a $1-billion deficit in fiscal 1982, and search for ways in which it might be closed. The city forecasts a 4 per-cent attrition rate in its employees which, cumulatively after three years, would save $500 million in that year. A 4 per-cent attrition of the city's work force is about one-half of the natural rate of voluntary separations. It may not sound unreasonable to make do with such a loss each year, but the special circumstances of city government have to be considered.

The attrition of employees whose wages are paid partly or wholly by the state and federal governments does less good or no good at all, as the case may be. Large parts of the city work force —including the Department of Social Services (welfare)—fall into these categories. If a welfare caseworker quits his job, and is not replaced, the salary saved is offset by a corresponding drop in the aid payable by state or federal government or both. If the city pays one-quarter of the salary of a welfare caseworker, it must count on a 16 per-cent attrition rate in order to make a 4 per-cent payroll saving by attrition. Sixteen per cent is an unheard-of attrition rate; if it occurred, no department could function after three years.

If extraordinarily high rates were not achieved in welfare, then departments supported entirely by city tax levy or unrestricted government grants would have to allow their forces to be cut by more than 4 per cent to reach the target average rate. But the tax-supported departments are those concerned with public safety—fire, police, sanitation. They are protected in some cases by state law; and by the force of public fear.

As an alternative to attrition, the city could try to brave union wrath by cutting *en bloc* services which the city now provides. But which ones? Clearly not the public-safety services. Shall the blow fall then on departments of less generally accepted essentiality?

Thus, for example, the city might close down the housing-inspection agency, firing all the inspectors who mark down violations of the housing laws. Unfortunately, this would offend the powerful constituencies of tenants and public-interest advocates who do not agree with a blanket condemnation of the inspection process. And similar constituencies spring up on behalf of every "soft" service: public libraries, the city university, day-care centers, old-age centers, manpower training. Largely supported by federal grants—sometimes categorically restricted, sometimes not—they are so small in their impact on a $1-billion deficit that a mayor who thinks of cutting them cannot really be blamed for quailing at the prospect of so much rage with so little saving.

If attrition or *en bloc* payroll cuts do not make it possible to balance the budget, a reduction in welfare benefits or a vast increase in federal assumption of welfare costs must be considered. The city's share of welfare costs cannot be cut because the much greater sums distributed by the federal and state governments would disappear. But there could be an assumption by the federal government of a larger share of the welfare load. Nothing would give New York City more temporary relief than this. Such a shift could be justified on the grounds that welfare is a problem of national economic and demographic trends, and that it is unfair for New York City to carry so heavy a load. Justification does not constitute political acceptance, however. The problems in the way of national welfare reform seem insuperable; welfare reform is opposed just as vigorously by those who claim it will do too little for the poor as by those who claim it will do too much.

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We are left, then, with only one strategy that might bring New York's expenses into conformity with its present resources: a strategy of reductionism. New York City was laid out to serve a population of at least 7.8 million. Its total population may not much exceed 6 million today—a 25 per-cent reduction, greater than the reduction achieved in the city's work force, approximately 320,000 today, down from about 360,000 at its peak.

In the very nature of human settlement, it is easier to expand than contract, and no one should expect that the number of public servants can be reduced in direct proportion to the number of inhabitants. A city which refuses to reconstruct the neighborhoods its citizens have largely abandoned might be able to reduce the ratio of present employees and present citizens more effectivly than a city which refuses to recognize both the geographic and economic results of population loss. Unfortunately, President Carter's vow to rebuild housing in an abandoned section of the Bronx moves in the latter direction.

But even if the city concentrated its management efforts on reducing its manpower and purchase (electricity, for example) in depopulated sections, a major hole would remain in the bottom of its pocket; it is committed to paying interest and amortization on the money it borrowed to create the larger city of the past. The present city will be unable to continue the operations it requires today while paying for obligations it contracted during its years of growth.

If the budget cannot be balanced, the city will ultimately take refuge in bankruptcy no matter what promises are made to the contrary. A federal judge would then determine how the city should treat all the classes of people and institutions to which it owes money. The judge's job would be unprecedented. Public safety, public health, education, transportation in the city depend not only on the continuing service of the city's employees, but also on the supplies and services provided by thousands of independent vendors and contractors, all of whom would, in the event of bankruptcy, be terrified that they would never receive payment of their bills past and future. In order to keep the people of the city alive, a federal judge would surely give precedence to necessary day-to-day functions, but the administrative complexity of achieving this goal would be staggering. Probably the judge would ultimately approve a plan for stretching out the debt-service payments on the city's obligations. Such a plan might also include scaled-down payments to unsecured creditors who had sold to and billed the city before the bankruptcy petition. The effect of their losses on the city's economy would be immense, as would a debt stretchout affecting the commercial banks which hold city obligations, the employee pension funds that have also purchased them, and the general investing public. Because more of these obligations are outstanding now than in 1975, the pains would be even more pervasive than they might have been then.

The city expects to pay more than $2 billion on its debts this year, a sum almost twice as large as the projected budget gap for the fiscal year beginning in 1981. If one-quarter of the debt service could be eliminated by interest reduction, long-term postponement, or outright cancellation, the budget gap would be reduced to $500 or $600 million, subject to the uncertainties listed by the deputy state comptroller for New York City. This much smaller gap might be closed with additional federal money and attrition of the work force at a practical rate. Obviously, such a proposal would be greeted with screams of anguish from the banks, the pension-fund trustees, and other holders of the city's obligations, for all of whom it would mean voluntarily settling for less than they were entitled to. Yet if they do not accept a settlement like this voluntarily, they may very well be forced to accept a similar one by a bankruptcy court. Indeed, if the whole fiscal crisis had not been misdiagnosed as a matter of cash flow, an accommodation of this kind might have been worked out three years ago. Possibly.

III

Several theories have attained wide circulation in the effort to explain what happened to the "richest city in the world." Jack Newfield and Paul Dubrul have ascribed New York's troubles to a cabal of bankers, real-estate interests, and politicians who, they say, conspired to sell bonds which they then rendered worthless and dumped on an unwitting public. It is surely correct to say that politicians and some real-estate people (in company with union members and many New Yorkers) urged development policies on the city which resulted in the issuance of bonds. It is also true that the bankers who were the major underwriters of the city's debt obligations made money selling these bonds, and purchased them long after they should have stopped. It is probably also true that they sold New York securities after they became suspicious of them. Yet it is hard to formulate a motive which would have impelled the banks to make the securities become worthless, or how they (or the real-estate developers) benefitted from a financial crisis which they, in this theory, fomented.

Another theory is that New York is different from the rest of the country, less "American," and therefore more corrupt and dissolute. Its troubles, by this account, spring from gross malfeasance by the municipal government, graft on an immense scale, and huge programs intended to accomplish social goals which actually accomplished the enrichment of a few leaders at the very top of the

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government. Now, New York's government is indeed swollen, and supervision of the details of its operations from any central point is difficult, perhaps impossible. But the remedy often proposed—the decentralization of more of its operations—produces the even worse difficulty of finding local people able to execute programs faithfully without using them to feather their nests or promote their political ambitions or both. In any event, it has not been proved that a greater degree of corruption or incompetence accounts for New York's shakier position as compared with other of the nation's older cities.

The charge of differentness, or exoticism, carries with it a whiff of nativist prejudice. Yet the magnitude of New York's financial difficulties derives precisely from a widespread optimism about the American future which most Americans share; in this sense, New York is more rather than less American than the rest of the country. The difference is that in New York, optimism was not offset by the restraining influences that affected most other local governments in the nation. Most New Yorkers, being tenants rather than home-owners like the majorities in every other large American city, did not fight real-estate tax increases. Moreover, the immense proliferation of New York's professional activities—the lawyering, doctoring, teaching, architecting—meant that a large part of its leadership was not so immediately in contact with payrolls and cost evaluation as the business people who provide leadership in other American cities. As for New York's business people themselves, they tended, as manufacturing activities in the city declined, to be at a high pinnacle of business life, the board room, where the subject is policies not payrolls.

IN THE expansive mood of the war's end in 1945, New York's political leadership responded to the visions of the greater postwar America that was expected to emerge as the altarpiece of the "American Century." In pre-war days a major issue before the city had been the municipalization of the subway system that had been built and owned by private interests. The city's purchase had taken years to effectuate, and was closely linked to the vital question of the 5-cent subway fare. In the greater vistas of the postwar world, city government gradually came to see that much bigger programs could be financed, and that when the state of New York was reluctant to undertake them, the city could. The city built up its own university system, greatly expanding the chain of four senior colleges that had existed before the war, and adding a community-college chain to it. It rebuilt and extended the municipal-hospital system. It built new schools to accommodate a population that was on the move. It perpetuated a wartime rent-control system, that, at the very least, tended to keep down the taxable value of its existing residential real estate, and then it provided tax exemptions to encourage the construction of new housing, adding its own mortgages, covering 90-95 per cent of cost, as a further incentive to private builders.

Bowing to state law, without serious protest, it undertook to pay one-quarter of the highest welfare stipends to which the federal government contributed anywhere in the United States, and half of the welfare assistance to employable people without other means of support, the Home Relief program, to which the federal government did not contribute. It took advantage of the federal government's low-rent housing program on a scale disproportionately larger than that of any other big city. Its urban-renewal program disavowed any intent to raise the taxable value of the land cleared of blight; social policies dedicated the land to low-rent and middle-income housing, and to cultural and educational institutions free of taxes. It spent its money on manpower-training programs when black unemployment became its most serious socioeconomic problem; it added 8,000 men to its police force to fight crime. It established day-care centers, paying all the bills when other governments did not contribute, and old-age centers, also supported with municipal funds.

This is not to say that these programs were successful; nor does it mean that they were undertaken entirely for reasons of social benefaction. Every bit of school construction was supported not only by the contractors, building trades-union members, and building-materials dealers, but also by the unions of teachers and supervisory personnel, and by parent, good-government, and neighborhood groups. All the programs undertaken by the city increased somebody's income; all represented the consensus of disparately motivated people essential to any but the most autocratic system of government.

The remarkable thing about the New York consensus was not that a majority supported it, but that in effect no minority effectively opposed it. To be sure, local groups opposed specific low-income housing projects which they considered threatening to their neighborhoods and their way of life. Fringe right-wing groups, by no means supported by business leadership in the city, cautioned about taxes, but no one consistently asked how the city government would discharge the debts incurred in bringing these noble schemes to fruition. If borrowing to build hospitals, schools, or colleges fell within the constitutional debt limit of the city, all discussion of the wisdom of such proposals ended before it began. If the debt limit did not permit a proposal, the discussion did not end: a way would be sought to stretch the limit or set up a class of projects outside it. The most useful purpose of the debt limit was to give the mayor,

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whoever he might be, an opportunity to avoid building a proposal to which he had objections.

EVERY year the mayor of New York City delivers a message to the city council setting forth his budget for the following fiscal year. During practically the entire thirty years between 1945 and 1975, mayors talked about the difficulty of providing the money to do all the things the city wanted or had to do; but no word appears in any of the budget messages to suggest that municipal government's income depends not only on the imposition of taxes, but also on the production of wealth sufficient to pay the taxes. The final security for the bills New York was running up in the pursuit of its goals—the city's continued ability to produce wealth—was taken for granted.

The inescapable fact is that New York's policies —based on the theory that the richest can afford anything—coincided precisely with the policies of the national government as both came to a climax in the Lyndon Johnson years. The richest nation in the world could simultaneously engage the North Vietnamese in war, rally its allies in Europe, send economic assistance to the Third World, build a "Great Society," redress the wrongs inflicted on black Americans for over three hundred years, improve the quality of life, rescue the physical environment from desecration, rebuild the cities, and enrich the humanities. If those were the major American imperatives in the 1960's, then it must be said that New York's policies in its own spheres were essentially American in their matching hubris.

Today, both governments are paying the price of their inability to admit that the limit on their capacities to spend is set by their capacities to produce; both have neglected the fundamental priority of their own economic health and productivity. In precisely the same way that foreign interests have proclaimed their doubts of the nation's political wisdom by fleeing from its currency, so have interests outside New York City fled from its obligations. Thus, the problem is not so much whether the federal government will "save" New York City from its continuing crisis as whether the example of New York City will save the federal government from a similar crisis of its own.

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The Strange Unhappy Life of Max Perkins

Kenneth S. Lynn

In 1927, the Communist "authority" on American literature, Joseph Freeman, attacked the novelists of the period for their failure to contribute to the coming destruction of capitalism. Instead of depicting the class struggle in America, they wrote stories about sensitive individuals who were alienated from the philistine bourgeoisie but who could not even imagine its overthrow. Because the novelists themselves were politically dormant, Freeman charged, their books portrayed the intelligentsia as utterly helpless in the face of modern industrial civilization. Two years after the appearance of this much discussed diatribe, Malcolm Cowley began to play with a more romantic version of the same ideas in a series of evocatively written essays for *Hound and Horn* and the *New Republic*. Toward the end of 1932, Cowley co-authored the pamphlet, "Culture and the Crisis," which explained why the Communist William Z. Foster was the presidential candidate of recently awakened writers like himself. As his next contribution to political consciousness, he collected his magazine pieces on the 20's into a book, but made only a halfhearted effort to shape them into a unified narrative. The formal incoherence of *Exile's Return* (1934) reflects the laziness and self-indulgence that have been a problem for Cowley throughout his career.

Self-indulgence is also at the root of the substantive shortcomings of *Exile's Return*. The book is about literary exiles of the 20's. Yet Cowley ignores such important older expatriates as Edith Wharton and Bernard Berenson, while devoting nearly forty pages to the microscopically minor figure of Harry Crosby, who happened to have been born in the same year, 1898, that Cowley was. "A generation is usually computed at thirty years," observes the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but in the narcissistic perspective of *Exile's Return* the concept is computed in terms of writers who turned twenty-one years of age between 1915 and 1921. They had had common adventures and had formed common attitudes, Cowley argues, "that made it possible to describe them as a generation." And what, precisely, were those adventures and attitudes? "They had always rebelled," reads the clearest of Cowley's efforts to answer this question,

> if only by running away. First it was against the conventionality of their elders and the gentility of American letters; then it was against the high phrases that justified the slaughter of millions in the First World War; then it was against the philistinism and the scramble for money of the Harding years (although that rebellion took the form of flight).

The trouble with this statement—apart from its exaggeration of the rebels' feelings about the "gentility" of American letters—is that most of the literary notables of the period who came of age before 1915 or after 1921 shared the attitudes that supposedly set the lost-generation writers apart, and so did countless other Americans who never published a novel or read a little magazine. If Cowley and company felt lost, many of their incorrigibly "bourgeois" countrymen felt the same way. The literary exiles' feelings of disorientation defined a spiritual kinship with American life in the 20's, as well as an alienation from it.

Cowley, however, has no interest in the complexities of cultural analysis; black-and-white contrasts are his only stock in trade. Old versus young. Pre-war versus postwar. Sacred versus profane. Artist versus philistine. Departure versus return. Alienation versus integration. The crudity of Cowley's thinking about an era that he himself lived through is utterly astonishing, but what is even harder to credit is the long shadow that *Exile's Return* has cast on the thinking of other readers for more than forty years. No other interpretation of American literature has more engaged the national mind, or more thoroughly stultified it, than the legend of the lost generation that Cowley wove from the warp of the Communist line and the woof of his own romanticism. One of the principal reasons why we still do not possess a satisfactory account of the most fascinating decade in American literary history is that Cowley's polarities leave no room for paradoxes, and without an appreciation of paradoxes there can be no understanding of the 20's. Numerous biographies, too, have fallen drastically short of what they might have been because of their authors' inability to break free of *Exile's Return*, the latest case in

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point being A. Scott Berg's life of Max Perkins, the editor of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Thomas Wolfe.*

In the course of almost eight years of work, which began while he was still an undergraduate at Princeton, Berg went through tens of thousands of letters, interviewed scores of people—and rarely paused to reflect about the rich materials he was assembling. Why was Perkins such an unhappy man? Did the tensions and contradictions in his personality make him peculiarly receptive to certain authors? What does his career tell us about the decade in which he scored his greatest successes? Berg is so insensitive to psychology that he hardly touches the first two questions, but with the third he at least gets far enough to acknowledge that the study of an editor's life can be a means to larger ends. For an editor is a cultural middleman. If he is any good, he understands authors and he understands audiences. The biographer of an editor is therefore in a position to write cultural history of the broadest significance. Through the consideration of Perkins, a reconsideration of the 20's might have been launched. Unfortunately, Berg was unaware of any need for fresh discussion. First and last, he happily works within Cowley's clichés, automatically tailoring his painstaking researches to fit an all too familiar pattern. *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius* is a book of miserably wasted opportunities.

It is Berg's black-and-white belief that the publishing business in the 20's was made up of good guys and bad guys, and that the peerless leader of the good guys was Max Perkins. The subtitle of Berg's biography hails Perkins as an editorial genius, while the Shelley sonnet which serves as epigraph to the text bids us think of him as a lonely prophet moving through the unheeding many, "A splendor among shadows, a bright blot/Upon this gloomy scene. . . ." He was "a kind of hero," we are told in Chapter 1, who not only "discovered" Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Wolfe, but "staked his career" on them, "defying the established tastes of the earlier generation and revolutionizing American literature." Now, no one would deny that Perkins had many admirable qualities. He was what people used to call a real gentleman, which in his case meant more than manners. His unflagging loyalty and kindness brought him many friends, and he was a responsible father to the five daughters he had wanted to be sons. His in-house evaluations of the manuscripts of Fitzgerald and Hemingway were remarkably perceptive, while the thousands of hours he devoted to cutting and rearranging the paper avalanches that Wolfe called novels set a record for editorial patience that still endures. The brassy fanfares of biographer Berg, however, grossly exaggerate Perkins's achievement and drown out the lessons we can learn from its limitations.

Predictably, the first person to present Perkins as a romantic hero taking on the suffocating orthodoxies of the publishing world single-handedly was the author of *Exile's Return*, writing in the *New Yorker* in 1944. In a two-part profile, Cowley described Scribners at the time that Perkins went to work there as a "fantastic" publishing house, "with an atmosphere like Queen Victoria's parlor." Perkins, however, put through sweeping changes, and the house "took a sudden leap from the age of innocence into the midst of the lost generation." Berg not only quotes this piece of rubbish with approval, but embroiders it with enthusiasm. Following up on Cowley's words about Queen Victoria, he says that at the end of the second decade of the 20th century the three pillars of the House of Scribner were "long-established writers steeped in the English tradition," Galsworthy, Henry James, and Edith Wharton. There was a "Dickensian atmosphere" about the offices, and curmudgeonly Anglophiliacs held the reins of power. At age sixty-six, Charles Scribner II, old CS, whose face "usually wore a severe expression," still ran the business, as he had for forty years. The editor-in-chief was William Crary Brownell, a white-bearded, walrus-mustached epitome of the genteel tradition, who had a habit of falling asleep in his office after lunch.

One would never be able to guess from this caricature of Victorian mustiness that old CS was a veritable dynamo of a man, "a born publisher with a great flair," as John Hall Wheelock has testified, "who truly loved getting books into print." Scribner had made a lot of money publishing such thoroughly un-English books as John Fox, Jr.'s novel of Kentucky, *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* (1903), and intended to go on making more until he died, which is why he carefully listened to Perkins's recommendation that the firm publish the first novel of an unknown writer named Fitzgerald and then decisively supported it. When *This Side of Paradise* (1920) proved to be a bestseller, Scribner was delighted, and sent a letter of thanks to the Irish poet and journalist Shane Leslie for discovering Fitzgerald. After reading Fitzgerald's manuscript, Leslie had sent it to Scribners, with a covering letter to the head of the firm. "Your introduction of Scott Fitzgerald," Scribner wrote to Leslie, "proved to be an important one for us; *This Side of Paradise* has been our best seller this season and is still going strong." Because he also was determined not to publish vulgarities, CS occasionally opposed Perkins's recommendations. Thus in 1925 he refused to publish Bruce Barton's portrayal of Christ as a supersalesman. But after *The Man Nobody Knows* began coining money for Bobbs-Merrill, Scribner was sorry he had not made an exception for this particular example of vulgarity. When Perkins reminded him that he had said it might sell, Scribner replied, "But you didn't tell

* *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius*, Dutton, 498 pp., $15.00.

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me, Mr. Perkins, that it would sell four hundred thousand copies."

Berg grudgingly describes the publisher as making this remark with a "faint twinkle" in his eye, just as he says that "even" the severe-faced CS laughed at a manuscript of Ring Lardner's stories, but these are the linguistic games of a mythmaking biographer. In fact, CS had a zestful wit, which was not at all surprising in a man with his appetite for life. When he died in 1930, a lot of the firm's vitality went with him. Perkins was at the peak of his editorial influence in the 30's, yet Scribners in this period was not nearly the house it had been in the final ten years under CS. Neither Faulkner nor Steinbeck came to grace the Scribners list—Perkins thought Faulkner was "crazy"—while blockbusters like *Anthony Adverse* and *Gone With the Wind* made the stockholders of other companies happy. In a caustic letter to Perkins in 1938, Edmund Wilson spoke of the "general apathy and morbidity into which Scribners seems to have sunk. You people haven't shown any signs of life since old man Scribner died. . . ."

Berg is equally misleading about Brownell and the much-maligned genteel tradition for which he stood. Genteel-tradition critics like Brander Matthews, James G. Huneker, and Brownell had no desire to keep American literature tied to Queen Victoria's skirts; they urged, rather, that American writers help to create a truly cosmopolitan culture. Brownell, the author of admiring books about French literature and art, felt that the greatest deficiency in American writing was its want of craftsmanship, its lack of form. If our writers would only submit their native energies to French discipline, they might become masters. Henry James and Edith Wharton exemplified the cultural amalgamation of which he dreamed. Thus Berg's reference to these writers as "steeped in the English tradition" completely misses the point of Brownell's fascination with them. They represented a cultural phenomenon that was neither English nor traditional.

Although Brownell was a conservative critic whose favorite word was "standards," he was not an opponent of change, in the manner of the neohumanists Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. Brownell voted against the publication of *This Side of Paradise* because its frivolousness offended him. But on the day that the manuscript of *The Great Gatsby* came across his desk, he was as ready to bless the wedding of imaginative abundance and formal control as when he first read *The Golden Bowl* and *The Custom of the Country*. Emerging from his office, Fitzgerald's manuscript in hand, Brownell called to his colleagues, "May I read you something beautiful?" In a letter to Fitzgerald, T. S. Eliot praised *Gatsby* by mentioning it in the same breath with Henry James. One wonders if Brownell was also thinking of that literary progression, as he stood outside his office reading aloud from the novel, and of the important role he himself had played in the cosmopolitanizing of modern American literature.

Just as Brownell was not a literary reactionary, so Perkins was not a revolutionary. One of the most significant omissions in Berg's biography is his failure to describe Perkins's editorial role in the publication of Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle*. The book is one of the three or four most distinguished that Scribners published during Perkins's long tenure. Yet Berg reproduces not a word from Perkins to Wilson concerning it, and gives us no indication that Perkins was conscious of the book's importance, or even that he was proud to have it on the Scribners list. Berg tells us far more than we want to know about Perkins's encouragement and approval of the work of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Marcia Davenport, but on the subject of his opinion of *Axel's Castle* silence prevails. The fact that Perkins was woefully unfamiliar—and in all likelihood quite unsympathetic—with the Symbolist writers whom Wilson was discussing almost certainly explains Berg's evasiveness. But while his biographer is anxious to minimize Perkins's intellectual shortcomings, Perkins himself was quite candid about the inadequacy of his literary knowledge. "How frightfully ignorant I am in literature," he once exclaimed to Hemingway, "where a publishing man ought not to be."

Not surprisingly, his ignorance frequently led to lapses in taste and displays of naiveté. One of his favorite house authors in the 30's and 40's was Taylor Caldwell, and he would become furious whenever literary critics or other Scribners editors ("pedantic editors," Berg loyally calls them) attacked her as a pulp writer, which is precisely what she was. He touted the third-rate Maxwell Geismar as "the best of the up-and-coming literary essayists." And he was so impressed by the superficial scholarship of Alden Brooks's *Will Shakespeare and the Dyer's Hand* as to be completely convinced that "the man Shakespeare was not the author of what we consider Shakespeare's works."

To his enduring credit, Perkins at once saw the importance of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Wolfe, but despite what Berg says, he discovered none of them. Shane Leslie, as we have seen, brought Fitzgerald to Scribners; Hemingway was an established author when he signed on with the firm; and it was the literary agent Madeleine Boyd who aroused Perkins's interest in Wolfe by telling him that unless he promised to read "every word" of Wolfe's "extraordinary" first novel, she would not show it to him. Furthermore, Perkins did not stake his whole career on these writers, as Berg maintains. The only episode that even comes close to vindicating this romantic claim was when Perkins argued with CS and the other members of the editorial board that the firm ought to publish *This Side of Paradise*. "If we're going to turn down the likes of Fitzgerald, I will lose all interest in publishing

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books," Perkins declared. Berg seems to believe that Perkins would have resigned if he had not had his way, but nothing in Perkins's carefully plotted career suggests that he would have carried out this threat, if indeed it was a threat. As Wolfe knew, Perkins was an extremely clever bargainer —which is why Wolfe gave him the name of Fox when he portrayed him in his fiction:

> O, guileful Fox, how innocent in guilefulness and in innocence how full of guile, in all directions how strange-devious, in all strange-deviousness how direct! Too straight for crookedness, and for envy too serene, too fair for blind intolerance, too just and seeing and too strong for hate, too honest for base dealing, too high for low suspiciousness, too innocent for the scheming tricks of swarming villainy—yet never had been taken in a horse trade yet!

In the discussion of *This Side of Paradise*, Perkins knew that he could not win a strictly literary argument with the formidable Brownell, so he chose instead to talk about the folly of turning away fresh talent. This was exactly the kind of practical argument that made sense to CS. In the end, it was not Brownell's high standards but Perkins's canny appeal to his boss's business instincts that carried the day. Berg's quixotic interpretation of his hero's words blocks awareness of Perkins's resourcefulness as a bureaucratic infighter.

YET Perkins went to bat for *This Side of Paradise* not only because he thought it was smart to invest in youth, but because he genuinely liked the novel. Fitzgerald's work spoke to him, as did Hemingway's and Wolfe's. Berg ascribes his instantaneous appreciation of their writings to editorial genius, but Perkins misjudged so many other important books in the course of his career that the explanation is unsatisfactory. Somehow, his sensibility had been conditioned to respond to these three particular authors. It is therefore to the events of Perkins's private life and to the nature of his personality that we must turn for an explanation of the editorial discernments that made him famous.

One of the most glaring faults of the Berg biography is that it pays almost no attention to Perkins's early relationship with his parents. Thus the biography is more than half over before we learn from a passing phrase that Perkins's mother regarded literature as "mental candy." Whether this grossly unsympathetic attitude was in any way symbolic of the way she had treated her bookish son Max during his formative years, Berg does not say, but if it was, then it helps to explain why Perkins as a grown man felt throttled by women, as Alice Roosevelt Longworth observed. Indeed, a number of people believe that he hated women, and certainly his persistent refusal to allow his wife, Louise, to pursue a career in the theater, even though her failure to achieve artistic fulfillment was manifestly damaging her personality, lends substance to the charge.

No less an authority than the dramatist Edward Sheldon assured the Perkinses that Louise had "talent galore for a career on the stage," but Max, having extracted a promise from Louise before they were married that she would not become a professional actress, would not budge. The quarrels that marked their marriage from the first increased in bitterness with the years. Eventually Louise converted to Catholicism, much to Max's disgust, and laid her histrionic talent on the altar of Jesus Christ with a fervor that came to seem like madness. Not satisfied with going to mass every day and cloistering herself on week-long retreats, she sprinkled holy water all over the house, dousing Max's pillow several times a week. After his death her deterioration accelerated. In the last half-decade of her life she was drunk every night, and finally died as horribly as Zelda Fitzgerald did, after falling asleep while smoking. Instead of acknowledging his own complicity in what was happening to her, Max simply scorned Louise for her bizarre behavior and sought excuses for spending the night away from home. To this highly frustrated husband, the stories of men without women that Hemingway submitted to Scribners must have seemed like balm in Gilead, while misogynistic masterpieces like "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" offered more savage satisfactions, as did Wolfe's evisceration of his mother in *Look Homeward, Angel.*

Interwined with Perkins's feelings about women was an irremediable sadness about all of life. In Van Wyck Brooks's opinion, Perkins was engaged in a "perpetual war with himself that made him in the end 'a prey to sadness.' " Caught in a "despairing refusal" to be himself, he did not give "the consent of his will to his own being." In the face of such a terrible inhibition, one wishes more than ever that Berg had had an interest in tracing patterns of childhood experience. Alas, all that can be gleaned from his book about the early evidences of Perkins's psychic conflict is his reaction to the loss of his father, who died when Max was seventeen. As the oldest male child still living at home, Max felt it incumbent upon himself to smother his grief, sit at the head of the table, and become the surrogate father of his younger siblings. At an age when he might still have been involved in an uncompleted Oedipal struggle, he also in effect claimed his mother. If indeed she had treated him insensitively, his ensuing resentment did not represent the sum total of his feelings about her. He was not entitled, however to the claim he now staked, and he may very well have incurred a sense of guilt about what he had done to his dead father. In any event, when he blurted out to one of his daughters a generation later that "Every good deed a man does is to please his father," he unconsciously revealed some sort of expiation.

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THE son who forever sought to please his father fiercely wanted to father a son of his own. After Louise presented him with his fifth daughter, he gave up trying. Consequently, Perkins's wish for a son would have gone unfulfilled if he had not met an enormously gifted, desperately flawed young man from North Carolina who himself had lost his father and needed paternal guidance. The incredible editorial effort that Perkins brought to bear upon the chaos of Wolfe's manuscripts and his unending willingness to put up with Wolfe's egomania, foul temper, and treachery had nothing to do with the publishing business, in the final analysis. Perkins did not merely collaborate with the author of *Look Homeward, Angel* and *Of Time and the River*, as Bernard De Voto charged in a famous critique; he adopted him. Together, Wolfe and Perkins roamed the nighttime streets of Manhattan and Brooklyn, or sat drinking and talking in bars. The hungry author also became a fixture at the Perkinses' dinner table. As Wolfe's literary agent, Elizabeth Nowell, recalled, "He all but lived there as a member of the family—or as Perkins's son, which to all intents and purposes he was. Perkins never seemed to see enough of him. . . ." The obsessions of Wolfe's fiction—the death of a father, the loneliness of youth, the search for "an unfound door" —formed an accompaniment to a real-life drama of extraordinary intensity.

That Wolfe ultimately dissociated himself from Scribners is very much in the punitive pattern of what Perkins was always doing to himself. All his adult life, Perkins lived within the bounds of self-denial. His marriage was a nightmare, but he never considered divorce. The furniture in his office was old and scarred, the floor rugless. His white shirts—what other color was there?—peeked through the thinning fabric at the elbows of his suitcoats. At Cherio's, his favorite restaurant, he ate the same meal day after day, until the waiter took the initiative to bring him something different. Hand in hand with asceticism went prudishness. No "real lady" drinks beer or seasons her food with Worcestershire sauce, he announced. "In our family," he warned his daughters, "we say underclothes, not underwear."

His devotion to his work was abnormal. It was as if he were trying to drown himself in fatigue. Weekends and holidays he considered an abomination, and did his best to survive them by reading through the bulging briefcases he lugged home from the office. At the same time, his imagination was flooded with fantasies of escape and transformation. When the time was ripe, he would run away. In the past he may have had a far more important identity than he did now, and he might assume another in the not too distant future. Somewhere there was a perfect woman who lived apart from modern life and knew the secret of how to make him happy. "I have a vision of taking to the road at sixty," Perkins confessed to his Harvard classmate, Waldo Pierce. Friends familiar with Perkins's doodlings were aware of a far gaudier dream. For years he obsessively sketched portraits of Napoleon, always in left profile, on any piece of paper that came to hand, and the more he sketched, the more the Emperor of the French came to resemble Max Perkins. The futuristic counterpart of this breathtaking communion with the past was the thought that some day he would become President of the United States. He would retire to Vermont and edit a country gazette—which soon would be read by millions, as the brilliance of his opinions brought him to the attention of the entire nation. Not long thereafter, a grateful people would ask him to assume the Presidency. "Of course, Max never *really* wanted to be President," John Hall Wheelock has said. Nevertheless, Perkins held himself in secret readiness, outlining his positions on issues to whoever would listen and maintaining a perpetual concern for the country's welfare. Only his fantasy about the love of a perfect woman meant more to Perkins than his dream of taking power.

ELIZABETH LEMMON was eight years younger than Perkins and stunningly beautiful. When he met her in the spring of 1922, he felt she was unlike any other woman he had ever known. The daughter of a large old family with roots in Middleburg, Virginia, and Baltimore, she seemed to have stepped from the pages of a 19th-century romantic novel. Franklin D. Roosevelt also found such a woman in Lucy Rutherfurd, and Edward VIII discovered another in Mrs. Simpson. But Perkins neither married his dream woman nor made her his mistress. Sitting together in the Ritz Bar in New York in 1943, Perkins reached for Elizabeth's hand, but then pulled back. "Oh, Elizabeth," he exclaimed, "it's hopeless." "I know," she replied. That is the closest they ever came to physical contact, and the only time they ever explicitly discussed the true nature of their relationship.

Only occasionally in the long years of their love were they together. Letters were what held them close. For twenty-five years he wrote to her at her estate at Middleburg and she wrote back, addressing him at the office. Perkins's wife was aware that they corresponded, but had no idea how often, or what her husband said to this beautiful younger woman who never married. Although Perkins's letters suppressed the full truth of his feelings, he indirectly told Elizabeth everything. He spoke of his recurring bouts of depression. He told her that for him she had always represented the thought that life could be "wonderfully happy and good." In a particularly poignant variation on the same motif, he declared that "after I have been with you I always feel again that those things that now generally seem to be an illusion really do exist." Through Elizabeth, Perkins sustained a dream that

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was commensurate with his capacity for wonder.

Can there be any doubt why Perkins was attracted to Fitzgerald's fiction? A beautiful Southern woman was Fitzgerald's symbol, too, of the possibilities of perfect happiness. Yet his moral pessimism, no less deeply ingrained than Perkins's, caused him to believe that if dreams were ever realized they would die; when you get too close, things go glimmering, the author's spokesman warns in the story called "Absolution." Perkinsian themes can be found throughout Fitzgerald's fiction, but it is in *Gatsby* that they are most striking. The transformation of anonymous James Gatz into the rich and mysterious Jay Gatsby is a literary acting-out of Perkins's Napoleonic doodlings and secret preparations for the Presidency. The description of Gatsby standing in the darkness, his arms outstretched toward the green light which marks the property where the Southern-born Daisy Buchanan lives, is only the most memorable of a dozen passages in the novel in which Perkins must have recognized a parallel to his own relationship with a dream woman. And Nick Carraway's simultaneous attraction to conservatism and experimentalism, as typified by his confession that whereas he "wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever," Gatsby was "exempt" from the requirement, was the story of Perkins's double life as well. "I think I'm peculiarly cursed in almost always knowing what I ought to do," Perkins once told Elizabeth, forgetting for the moment that even an epistolary love affair was a departure from the rules.

A paradoxical combination of conservative and experimental ideas dominated the minds of many Americans in the 20's. Middletown, Robert and Helen Lynd noted in 1929, in their famous "Study in American Culture," "tends to be at once . . . conservative and . . . experimental in those regions where its children are concerned." On the one hand, parents insisted that their offspring go to Sunday School, just as they had; on the other hand, they supported a group dental and medical program in the public schools that was unprecedented in their Republican philosophy. Caught between conflicting viewpoints, Middletown parents often felt torn apart by the effort to raise their children. Other citizens, not just in Middletown but across the nation, experienced the same sensation of inner division and uncertainty, as they attempted to cope with the problems of work and marriage in an era of bewilderingly rapid change. Fitzgerald remarked that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function," but in the 20's that test was administered to Americans regardless of their intelligence level.

At times, it became bafflingly difficult to decide whether an idea was old or new. Prominent architects and critics of architecture, for instance, were influenced by Henry David Thoreau's ascetic insistence that less is more. Did their Thoreauvianism represent a throwback to the 19th century, or was it avant-garde? Lewis Mumford's inability either to accept the soaring skyscrapers of the modern city or to stop writing about them was a function of his larger inability to answer this question. Perkins, too, could not decide whether his asceticism was backward-looking or up-to-date. The descendant of Vermonters, he had a fondness for the laconic prose of Calvin Coolidge, and in the 20's he edited a collection of Coolidge's speeches. Yet his pleasure in linguistic economy also made him an admirer of the stripped-down modernism of Hemingway's style. Moreover, the personal friendship between Hemingway and Perkins developed more rapidly than it otherwise might have because Hemingway kept presenting himself to Perkins as a fellow ascetic. Always rivalrous, Hemingway very much wanted to displace Fitzgerald in Perkins's affection. To that end, he took every opportunity to remind Perkins that Fitzgerald squandered both his money and his talent on riotous living, whereas he himself worked assiduously and lived frugally.

In the course of the 30's, however, Hemingway's self-discipline went slack. His letters to Perkins continued to speak scornfully of Fitzgerald's drinking problem, but it was his own that secretly frightened him. Ironically, the alcoholism he did not wish to talk about probably bound Hemingway more closely to Perkins than the asceticism he formerly had advertised. For Perkins, in his quiet way, was also turning into a relentless boozer. Even in the 20's, he sometimes had shown an astonishing capacity to go the distance with heavy sluggers like Ring Lardner. But as his fantasies of political power failed to materialize and the House of Scribner slid further downhill, the aging editor began instructing the bartenders who mixed his martinis to make them doubles. "Daddy, don't you drink too much?" one of his daughters asked in 1942. "Churchill drinks too much," replied Perkins, in an inadvertently revealing comparison; "all great men drink too much." James Jones, his last important writer, recalled that Perkins displayed an "iron control" during their meetings. "From the steady way he walked, you could never tell that he was drunk." Even in his cups, Perkins was unable to give the consent of his will to his own being.

Americans in the 1920's lived in a state of tension between conservatism and experimentalism. While this tension generated a nervous excitement that we have come to think of as typical of the era, it also led to a terrible sense of defeat, when it proved to be unresolvable. Some of the era's finest works of fiction testify to those feelings of defeat. So does the strange and unhappy life of Max Perkins.

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Pluralism Ancient and Modern

Milton Himmelfarb

THE punch line of the old Soviet joke goes, "If everything is so good why is everything so bad?" About pluralism we may ask, If it is so popular why is it so unpopular?

For pluralism's critics, its popularity is one of the worst things about it. Pluralists, for their part, could easily believe that they have less to fear from criticism than from a seeming conspiracy of silence. Not until its third edition (1961) did *Webster's International Dictionary* add a definition of "pluralism" that accords with what reasonably well-educated Americans, for at least a generation, had probably first thought of when hearing or seeing the word: something about different groups living in one place. Six years later the *Random House Dictionary* was still blackballing the upstart. Its two definitions are those of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: philosophical, in contrast to monism; and ecclesiastical, like a theme in a novel by Trollope, referring to a clergyman's holding more than one benefice. That is easier to understand in a 19th-century British dictionary than a 20th-cenutry American one.

Under "pluralism" the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1933) spoke of municipal and economic interests, not of groups constituted by difference of origin, and thirty-five years later the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* was little different. In the early years of this century Israel Zangwill gave us a metallurgical figure for America, the melting pot: not melted itself, a melting pot melts together the metals poured into it. Disagreeing, Horace Kallen offered a musical figure for the cultural pluralism he wanted to encourage: a symphony, or symphony orchestra, which uses rather than suppresses the diversity of sounds and instruments, and cannot even come into being without that diversity. The *International Encyclopedia* mentions Kallen once—on psychoanalysis. Its index lists many things beginning with "cultural," including "cultural morphology" and "cultural relativism," but not "cultural pluralism" between them.

About ethnic or cultural pluralism, silence; about interest-group pluralism, distaste. For example, in the *Journal of Politics* (1977), a writer refers matter-of-factly to "the conservatism of pluralism in politics (and research)." The *International Encylopedia of the Social Sciences* agrees: ". . . the pluralist position . . . may be viewed as a conservative reaction against the presumed effects of a mass society." If a reaction, why not reactionary? The Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson writes a book against pluralism that he calls *Ethnic Chauvinism: The Reactionary Impulse* (1977).

Is "the power structure" still the prevailing cant for "the ruling class"? Pluralist scholars have shown that power in America is not a single and undivided structure. Therefore they must be conservative, defenders of the ruling class.

Another reason for damning pluralism as conservative can be seen in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*' "stalemate . . . deadlock . . . inaction." When you have to get everybody's consent how can you get anything done? You are a city planner. You have fed the problem to the computer a dozen times and the answer always comes out the same: that moth-eaten old tree must go. Do they let you go ahead and get rid of it? Neighborhood preservationists and woodman-spare-that-tree sentimentalists and Environmental Protection Agency red-tape artists won't let you. Or you are a minority-recruitment dean. You do not need a computer, you *know* that justice requires a blind eye and a thumbed nose to that reactionary aptitude-test stuff. Do they let you do what needs to be done? Ethnics and meritocrats and Jews start yelling about quotas and reverse discrimination. If it were not for the courts, which, thank Heaven, are a House of Lords still sheltered from that great beast the people, the obstructionists might block us good guys in our pursuit of justice. Change is good, pluralism slows change, therefore pluralism is bad.

That "the pluralist position . . . may be viewed as a conservative reaction" we are told at the beginning of the last paragraph of the *International Encyclopedia*'s article. At the end we are told that "political pluralism as an ideology has lost most of its explicit apologists and only lingers quietly as a

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submerged, inarticulate ingredient of Western liberalism." This does not imply that Western liberalism itself has kept most of its explicit apologists. And how do you distinguish between Western liberalism and democracy?

Nor does pluralism fare much better at the hands of historians. Two well-received studies of colonial New York—Michael Kammen's *Colonial New York* (1975) and Douglas Greenberg's *Crime and Law Enforcement in the Colony of New York* (1976)—find that it was worse off than other colonies in such things as crime because it was more pluralist, more diverse and heterogeneous.

THE late Greek idea of the cosmopolis, the world city, is transparently not pluralist. The earlier, classical *polis*, though everyone understood it to depend on a division of labor among its inhabitants, was not much more pluralist. From Aristotle to the Founding Fathers, and beyond, faction was the nightmare of political thinkers. Aristotle taught that to avoid faction citizens must intermarry (1280b) and have a common descent (1303a). He took it for granted that all would worship the gods of an established cult (1329a).

The pluralism Aristotle accepted without regret was that which arose from the very nature of the *polis*, its being small enough for citizens to know each other. Since each *polis* had to be small, there had to be many *poleis*. Unbroken peace was therefore impossible, if not actually undesirable, not only between Greeks and barbarians but also between Greeks. From *polis* is derived *polites*, "citizen," and from this in turn is derived *politikos*, "political—having to do with citizenship, or statesmanship, or public affairs." *Bios politikos* is "political life." When Aristotle uses this expression (1265a, 1327b) he means, not at all disapprovingly, "expansionism, imperialism." He advises how to site a *polis* advantageously for offense as well as defense (1326b f.).

With Jews and Christians, the word that resounds in their Bible—the key word, the word of power—is not "many." It is "one": "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One." The Bible is monist.

It is from Isaiah 2 (and Micah 4) that lovers of peace, even the peace-loving UN, take a verse of promise and hope: ". . . they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;/nation shall not lift up sword against nation,/ neither shall they learn war any more." Everybody used to know, but in these well-educated days few know, what precedes this apparently uncontroversial, universalist sentiment as its necessary condition:

> And many peoples [Micah: nations]
> shall come, and say:
> "Come, let us go up to the Mount of
> the LORD, to the House of the God
> of Jacob;
> that He may teach us His ways
> and that we may walk in His paths."
> For out of Zion shall go forth the
> Law [*Torah*], and the word of the
> LORD from Jerusalem.
> He shall judge between the nations
> [Micah: between many peoples]
> and shall decide for many peoples
> [Micah: for mighty nations afar
> off]. . . .

It is only when the peoples and nations are one in seeking and heeding the one God of Jacob that they will find peace.

MICAH enlarges famously on those agricultural metaphors: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree/and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of Hosts has spoken." There follows a verse that many modern Jews have loved to cite as proof of the Bible's tolerance and pluralism: "For all the peoples walk/each in the name of its god,/but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God/for ever and ever." No pre-modern Jewish tradition supports the modern Jewish understanding of this verse. Rashi contents himself with the Targum attributed to Jonathan b. Uzziel: "For all the peoples will go to destruction because they have worshipped their idols, but we shall trust in the Word of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Ibn Ezra: ". . . they will walk each in the name of its god, until the people of the [Jerusalem] Temple instruct them. . . ." Qimhi: ". . . they will walk each in the name of its god . . . until King Messiah turns them to the good way. . . ." So even Ibn Ezra and Qimhi, who here as usual are less anti-Gentile than Targum Jonathan and Rashi, understand Micah's toleration of the Gentiles' worship of any god but the true God as Jefferson and Lincoln were to understand the toleration of slavery by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution: the thing was tolerated because it was thought to be "in the course of ultimate extinction."

If Haman was not pluralist, neither were Mordecai and Esther. Haman's argument against tolerating the Jewish people is that though dispersed, it is unassimilated—*meforad*—with unique laws and customs. Among the reasons for doubting the Book of Esther's historical worth is that such advice from a Persian minister to his king would have been unconstitutional, as tending to subvert the polity. The book is true to history in that it knows the Persian king was the ruler of a multinational, polyglot, pluralist empire: "one hundred and twenty-seven provinces . . . all the peoples who are in all the provinces . . . every people in its own language." If the Jews were unique in their fashion, so were the others, each in its own fash-

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ion. Yet nobody says this to counter Haman. The author does not take the diversity of the others seriously. For him, in effect, there are only two groups, the Jews and everybody else. His happy ending is that the Jews slew their enemies, that "many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews"—*mityahadim*—and that Mordecai replaced Haman as prime minister. Hence we celebrate Purim. Purim is biblical.

Hanukkah is not biblical—or rather, it is not in the Hebrew Bible. Since the Rabbis had little regard for the Maccabees/Hasmoneans, even the first book of Maccabees, written in Hebrew, has come down to us only because it was translated for Greek-speaking Jews. Nowadays we like to say that Hanukkah is a festival of religious freedom, by implication pluralist. Did not the Maccabees rebel because Antiochus had decreed "to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and that each should give up its customs"? But it was not to champion the pluralist right of distinctiveness for all that the Maccabees rebelled, it was to preserve Jewish distinctiveness. Their enemies were less the Syrian Greeks than the Jewish assimilationists—*huioi paranomoi,* "lawbreaking children" of Israel—who had incited Antiochus to issue his decree. These "led many astray" when they urged the Jews to "come to terms with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many evils have befallen us." Victorious, the Hasmoneans did not recognize a religious freedom of those Jewish lawbreakers to break the Law, nor did they recognize a religious freedom of Idumeans not to be coerced into Judaism. (Herod was of Idumean stock.)

Christianity inherited this from Judaism. In Ezekiel (34 and 37) we read: "I will save My flock. . . . And I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he shall feed them. . . . I will make them one nation . . . and one king shall be king over them all. . . . My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd." But the shepherd king is only the vicar of the master Shepherd, God: ". . . I, I Myself will search for My sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock . . . so will I seek out My sheep. . . ." The echo of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John has had effects of some consequence on the history of Christendom: "one flock and one shepherd"—"pastor" is Latin for "shepherd," a bishop carries a crook—and "that they may all be one."

THOUGH modern thought breaks not only with biblical religion but also with classical philosophy, and though Jefferson has little more use for Plato than for "priestcraft," he does not break with their dislike of pluralism. Like Lincoln after him, Jefferson was regretfully convinced that American whites and blacks could not live together in friendly or even peaceful equality. Both Jefferson and Lincoln held that all men were created equal—not in body or mind but in what was decisively more important, heart. For both this was scientific, a fact of human nature that the "candid" must acknowledge and only the perverse could doubt. (That is what they meant by a self-evident truth.) For Lincoln, human equality was additionally, or alternatively, a somewhat religious "proposition," or tenet: scientific truths are not "tested" in battle, and we do not "dedicate" ourselves to them. (See *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence,* by Garry Wills, and *Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address, and American Constitutionalism,* edited by L.P.S. de Alvarez.) Both Jefferson and Lincoln were sure that only in Africa could black people be free to pursue their happiness and as a "People . . . assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them"—no more and no less than what the Declaration of Independence claimed for the nascent American people on this continent. A "separate and equal Station" for black *individuals* in America would not do.

So little could two of the greatest Americans, let alone Presidents, think of racial pluralism. Jefferson went farther. Not dissenting from the Enlightenment's populationism, he nevertheless opposed any substantial immigration from Europe. For a bigger and better Virginia he looked to the natural increase of the Virginians themselves, though it would be slower. Immigration would mean a republic flooded by newcomers untrained in republicanism, and that was too high a price to pay.

William Penn has been cited as an exception to the inveterate fear of pluralism: "Many Inquisitive Men into Humaine Affairs have thought that the *Concord of Discords* hath not been the infirmest basis Government can rise or stand upon." (Did Kallen read this?) Maybe Penn had the Aristotelian mixed constitution in mind.

AFTER this recital, perhaps the question should be reversed. If pluralism is so unpopular why is it so popular?

What other choices are there? Granted that the friendly equality of whites and blacks has proved to be if not impossible then difficult enough, should the white majority deport the black minority? Could it? With what horrors would we have to be visited before such rhetorical questions became actual? And if whites and blacks are ever to live together free and equal, and friendly, what is that if not pluralism? People who are truly free and equal determine for themselves how distinctive they wish to be—how groupy—and how undistinctive. In India the British raj forbade the Thugs to adhere to their group and to follow the Thug way of life. The Thugs were a criminal association, their way of life was murder and robbery,

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and murderers and robbers cannot persuasively assert a right to do what they do because that is how they pursue their happiness. But if a group is not inherently wicked or harmful, no one should have the right to penalize those taking part in its life. Of course, this naive idea is only a piece of Western liberalism.

High-minded men and women have long lamented that most people do not know what is really good for them. The best examples are British. The socialist Webbs and Shaw did not pretend that they were also democrats. In their weakness for despotisms that proclaimed themselves benevolent the Webbs and Shaw took an example from ancient philosophers and modern *philosophes*, and set an example for their own successors. Intellectuals can be more gullible than common folk about despots' claims to benevolence. Perhaps that is because common folk are less given to fancying that soon their turn will come to be the despots—benevolent, it goes without saying.

Naturally, that does not dispose of the matter. Democracy is notoriously absurd. *We* are learned, wise, good. *They* are ignorant, foolish, bad. How can anyone seriously maintain that the vote of one of us should count for no more than the vote of one of them?

There is no need to deny the follies and sins of pluralism/Western liberalism/democracy. When they do not make us cry they make us laugh. But again, what else is there? In our century, malevolent despotism.

Anyway, whatever we may think of the theory or the ideology, the fact of pluralism will not go away, because diversity will not go away. As with mountains, so with differences: while old ones are being leveled new ones arise. In 18th-century England the aristocracy said "port" and the merchants "port wine" until the merchants caught on and began to say "port," too, whereupon the aristocracy switched to "port wine." Blue jeans were supposed to put an end to distinctions of dress, and now connoisseurs of blue jeans can spot a thousand new distinctions.

France has been a highly centralized state since Napoleon's minister of education could look at his watch and know what was being taught in every classroom in the land, yet de Gaulle was to ask in exasperation how anyone could be expected to govern a country that insisted on producing 300 kinds of cheese. It is likely that France is more pluralist now than at any time since literacy and military service turned peasants into Frenchmen, in the last century.

A Jew who says the obligatory blessings will always have occasion to praise Him "who varies His creatures."

THE Jewish relation to all this is not simple. Are we talking of the Judaic tradition(s)? Or are we talking of people descended from people whose lives were willy-nilly enclosed within Jewish tradition and community but who may themselves be Judaic not at all and Jewish very little, at least consciously? Jews by imposition, by inertia, by choice?

Classical Jewish monism is anthropological as well as theological. That is nothing to be ashamed of. Would we welcome a pluralism that denies a common origin for all the human race? Rabbi Ishmael held that the most basic verse of Scripture was " . . . you shall love your neighbor as yourself . . ." (Leviticus 19:18). Very nice. Rabbi 'Aqiva, who died a martyr with the "One" of the *Shema'* on his lips, preferred the first of those tedious begats, "This is the book of the generations of Adam" (Genesis 5:1), because from it we learn that we are all of one descent and that consequently none of us may vaunt his lineage over another's. Bravo!

Even for pious Jews, Judaic anti-pluralism has no more binding force than Judaic ignorance of democracy. Maimonides on the laws of kingship is close to Ezekiel on a king of the house of David as shepherd and the people of Israel as the sheep in his charge. That does not obligate our pious to abjure democracy—or constitutional monarchy, or any other system of government tolerably free of bloodshed, rapine, and oppression. The tradition's influence is more indirect than that, it is in the background.

In the foreground is the historical experience of the Jews. Russian Jews used to tell a wry story. In their synagogues they were compelled to offer up a prayer for the czar. Some would say only what sounded like the prayer, which besought God to grant the ruler long life and *yatzliah* ("prosper") his enterprises. Instead they would mutter *yasriah* ("cause to stink"), finding in spiteful cleverness some consolation for their impotence. Exceptionally, a certain rabbi of the old school would say the prayer both correctly and fervently. Once he explained why: "Always wish long life to the czar. The next one will be worse."

That is, Jews used to be conservative, fearing change. Their condition might be wretched, but they expected change to make it more wretched still.

Jews were expelled from England, France, and Spain, but not from the Holy Roman Empire as a whole or Italy as a whole. They fared less badly in the Hapsburg empire than in its successor states, less badly in the Muslim Ottoman empire than in neighboring Muslim Persia. (They came late into the Russian empire.) In modern France the law and institutional arrangements, not to speak of the national ethos, were more anti-pluralist than in Great Britain. Arguably, this worked to produce greater constriction and discomfort in the French than in the British Jews. American pluralism has helped American Jews. For pre-modern Jews and most modern ones, therefore, history

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taught that pluralism was generally good for the Jews.

There were, however, two types of modern Jew who disliked pluralism. The first type was indifferent to "the lesson of history," not so much because historians themselves now doubt there is such a thing in any practical sense as because his passion was to make everything new, to throw into the garbage bin of history the past as it survives in the present. A Jew like that hated the very mentality which equated less bad with good. Especially did he hate to hear something praised as good for the Jews, since, as was to be expected, of all the parochialisms he detested Jewish parochialism most. He wanted a world free of religion, that sinister and noxious falsehood, and free of nationality. No more sects, no more tribes, one undivided humanity—that is the world as it should be. What has pluralism to do with the world as it should be?

Paul, an earlier Jew impatient with Jewish narrowness (as explicitly hallowed in the Morning Blessings), had said: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The revolutionary modern Jew only substituted a different ending: ". . . for we will all be one in the Revolution." If all Jews had listened to Paul, there would still be Greeks, and male and female, and even slave and free, but no Jews. What if all Jews had listened to Trotsky or Rosa Luxemburg, and Stalin had been gentler?

The second type of anti-pluralist Jew was of those who wanted to identify themselves with majority chauvinism and were unkindly called more Prussian than the Prussians, more Polish than the Poles, and so on. Many of these had themselves baptized.

To judge by their names, the two historians who find that colonial New York paid a high price for its pluralism are Jews. That is not enough to put them in the anti-pluralist camp. They may have found what any other honest and competent historians would find, and sensible pluralists will agree that pluralism has its costs. Who would rather try to govern Northern Ireland, or even Belgium, than Norway?

So most Jews are pluralist but some are not. Predictably, both pluralism and anti-pluralism have been called Jewish tricks. According to Oliver C. Cox, a black sociologist, the Jews seduced black people into the "black is beautiful" dead end in order to make it seem that pluralism was something more general and respectable than a cover for "immemorial Jewish tribal exclusiveness" ("Jewish Self-interest in 'Black Pluralism,'" *Sociological Quarterly*, 1974). According to Harold Cruse, a black intellectual, assimilationist Jews seduced black intellectuals into the dead end of color-blind Communism in order to make it seem that revolutionary universalism was something more than an escape hatch for people who had had enough of being Jews (*The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 1967).

MODERN Bible scholars find the tale of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11) easy to understand. It is mostly etiological, explaining our many languages, Babylonian temple architecture, and the name Babel. The classical Jewish exegetes find the tale hard to understand. Since oneness, monism, is good, why should the builders of the city and the tower be punished for wanting to remain one people with one language? The problem is so acute that Ibn Ezra, against the entire weight of the tradition, feels compelled to solve it by dissolving it. He denies that Scripture condemns the builders' desire. On "one people" (11: 6) he comments: "For they had one religion; because it is from difference of religion that there arise strife and spite"—*qin'ah we-sin'ah*, recalling a phrase in Rav's "habitual saying" about the contrasts between this world and the world to come (Berakhot 17a)—"as also from difference of language." Spinoza with his civil religion and Zamenhof with his Esperanto were to say much the same thing.

The greatest of the rationalist exegetes, Ibn Ezra, normally insists on the plain sense of Scripture, but here his rationalism prompts him not only to ignore tradition but also to deny the plain sense of the text itself. He tells us that God's scattering of the builders of the city and tower was neither punishment nor curse but blessing, since He had ordained that the human race should spread out over the earth (Genesis 9: 1): "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.'" As for the "tower with its top in the heavens," that is no more to be understood literally than Canaan's "cities great and fortified up to heaven" (Deuteronomy 9:1).

In the Midrash the point of the tale is precisely that the tower was to reach to heaven. Those presumptuous men—led by Nimrod, according to some—built their tower to invade heaven. Their punishment was dispersion, ceasing to be one people with one language.

But this created a new problem. The builders of the city and the tower—the Generation of the Dispersion, *dor haflagah* (or *ha-pelagah*?)—were punished far more lightly than the Generation of the Flood, which was utterly destroyed. Yet was not the crime of the Generation of the Dispersion more grievous? The Generation of the Flood had not gone so far as actually to prepare war against God and His angels.

The Midrash's solution is no less monist than Ibn Ezra's. The Generation of the Flood robbed and killed each other, while the Generation of the

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Dispersion lived in unity, peace, and friendship. The latter's sin was great—what the Greeks would have called hubris. But their virtue was also great—they loved one another. Instead of destroying them, therefore, God merely dispersed them. (So highly does the Holy One, blessed be He, value peace and so greatly does He reward the pursuers of peace.) The unity of the Generation of the Dispersion was in itself not bad but only premature, so to speak. When the time is ripe, when our unity is for a good purpose, God will approve.

Of the past it is written (Genesis 11:7),
"Come, let us go down, and there
confuse their speech."
And it is written (Psalm 55:10[9]),
"Destroy, O Lord, and divide [*pallag*] their
language, for I see
violence and strife in the city."
But in the future He will "restore to the
peoples a pure speech, that all of
them may call on the name of the LORD
and serve him with one accord" (Zephaniah 3:9).

Rav said there would be no procreation in the world to come, and Jesus had said there would be no marriage. There will be no democracy: only Abraham and Moses will be Abraham and Moses, and even the angels will not be archangels. And there will be no pluralism: "The LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD shall be one and His name one" (Zechariah 14:9). That day is the day when the Messiah comes. In Jewish exegesis the judge in Isaiah and Micah, like the shepherd in Ezekiel, is God's vicar, the Messiah.

Just as marriage and procreation are too earthly for the world to come and are only for this world, so democracy and pluralism are only for this world.

Time enough to be hoity-toity about democracy and pluralism when the Messiah comes.

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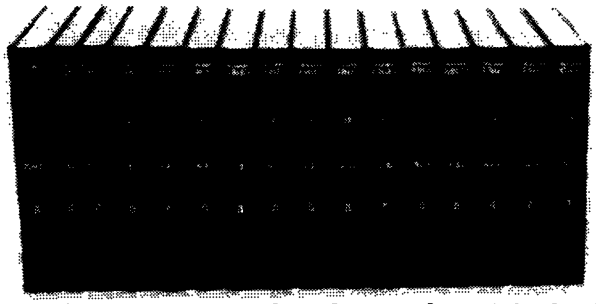

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Fiction

Good-Bad and Bad-Bad

Pearl K. Bell

In a short essay written for the English weekly *Tribune* in 1945, George Orwell resurrected a wonderfully useful oxymoron of Chesterton's—"good bad books." This mischievously perverse genre, in Orwell's reckoning, included not merely adventure stories and thrillers, meant only to distract, but the work of more serious-minded writers "whom it is quite impossible to call 'good' by any strictly literary standard, but who are natural novelists and who seem to attain sincerity partly because they are not inhibited by good taste." What distinguished such books above all was thir irresistible power to please, because "there is such a thing as sheer skill, or native grace, which may have more survival value than erudition or intellectual power." On this ground, Orwell confidently predicted that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would in the long run outlive the complete works of Virginia Woolf.

As this last remark indicates, the subject of popular fiction—both good-bad and bad-bad—is pitted with booby traps of prejudice and temperament, individual values and taste. Since Orwell despised the "aesthetes" of Bloomsbury, the abolitionist fervor of Mrs. Stowe would in his view perdure as the innovations of Mrs. Woolf would not; and he was wrong. But when Orwell speaks of "natural novelists" and "sheer skill," he has caught that element of good-bad fiction which is indispensable and unarguable—a narrative moving with such dramatic urgency that it takes possession of the reader, snaring one's curiosity and excited attention so imperiously that, at least while one reads, disbelief is suspended. The most glaring deficiencies of style and characterization dwindle to irrelevance, and austere literary standards crumble before the lust to find out what happens next and how it will all turn out. Readers are seized with a variety of tricks. One stock device of such fiction is the cliff-hanger, in which a character is plunged into a situation of extreme peril at the end of a chapter, and is left dangling while the writer shifts abruptly to a different scene. Or someone who is supposed to be in Singapore or Moscow miraculously pops up in Marseilles to the astonishment of wife, lover, brother, father. No matter what else such a writer has in mind, the unbreakable rules of good-bad fiction are variety and surprise.

But a curious change has occurred in recent examples of this sub-literary species, and it would seem on the face of it to violate the very heart of such books, which is compelling readability. In former days a romantic narrative like *Anthony Adverse* or *Gone With the Wind* was its own excuse for being, in the sense that it was the invented story that mattered far more than the perfect accuracy and fullness of the historical background. But now, along with his familiar manipulation of the unexpected, a conscientious popular novelist seems to feel that the story alone is insufficient, somehow too frivolous, and along with the make-believe excitements he must serve up encyclopedic slabs of information—about the automobile industry (Arthur Hailey's *Wheels*), about the history and prehistory of Colorado (James Michener's *Centennial*), about Australian sheep stations (Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds*), medieval Japan (James Clavell's *Shogun*), and the rag trade (Judith Krantz's *Scruples*).

None of these overstuffed geese, however, can rival the prodigious research and concern for facts that Herman Wouk has lavished on *War and Remembrance*,* a "historical romance," as he labels it, of World War II from Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima. His huge new book chronicles the wartime fortunes of the imaginary and actual persons who appeared in *The Winds of War*, published in 1971, and many, many more. In the foreword to *War and Remembrance*, Wouk calls that earlier volume a prologue—at 885 pages!—to his main tale, which is nevertheless self-contained. And in characteristically didactic tones he tells us that "I have put this theme [the end of war] in the colors and motion of the fiction art, so that 'he who runs may read,' and remember what happened in the worst world catastrophe."

The odd biblical phrase raises uncomfortable questions. How well and how much do we remember a story made for "he who runs"? Wouk makes no bones about the reader he aims to please, and this places *War and Remembrance* unequivocally in the bin of good-bad books—an undemanding vividness and ease take precedence at all times over any daunting complexities of thought, craft, or human behavior. This was particularly true of *The Winds of War*, which, for all its heft and soap-opera crudities, I could not, as the saying goes, put down. Unfortunately this obsessive magic is largely absent from *War and Remembrance*. For one thing, its burdensome thousand-page bulk is a lot harder to pick up than to put down. For another, the model navy family we first encoun-

PEARL K. BELL *is our regular fiction reviewer.*

* Little, Brown, 1,042 pp., $15.00.

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tered in the "prologue" seven years ago is essentially so cinematic and stereotyped that the characters, subjected to a relentless dose of domestic familiarity, have become acutely tedious.

But the main reason Wouk's imaginary persons now seem so preposterous and irritating is that the backdrop for their crises of love and war is the harrowing reality of history between 1941 and 1945. Juxtaposed against Wouk's masterly recreations of the Pacific naval battles of Midway and Leyte Gulf; his angry account of American bureaucratic callousness, high and low, toward Jewish refugees from Hitler; his knowledgeable descriptions of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz—the fictional creatures playing out his romance seem not merely trivial but offensively so. Time and again, Wouk the student of history writes a brilliantly evocative account of battle—he has mastered every maneuver, knows exactly how submarines, aircraft carriers, battleships, destroyers, dive bombers work, how the vast machinery of war was deployed during a particular operation—only to return with a dismaying thump to his super-Lanny Budd hero, Captain (eventually Admiral) Victor (Pug) Henry, USN, globe-circling troubleshooter and trusted confidant of Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, Nimitz, Halsey, and high-ranking Russian generals; a paragon of probity, character, common sense. What the polymathic Captain Henry does not know about nuclear fission, landing-craft couplings, military history, and the grave burdens of command is not, Wouk would have us believe, worth knowing.

Wouk's large design, of course, is to dramatize both the nobility and the horror of World War II by means of the tragic experiences endured by one ordinary, typical American family. Yet there is hardly a genuinely ordinary person among them, from the plastic perfection of Victor Henry to his conveniently Jewish daughter-in-law, who brings the fate of the European Jews into the Henry family circle. When her submarine-officer husband is sent to the Pacific, Natalie Jastrow Henry finds herself trapped in Italy with her uncle, Aaron Jastrow, a best-selling historian—born in Poland, educated at Harvard, living a splendid expatriate life in Siena—whose resemblance to Bernard Berenson is no accident. Once the United States and Italy are officially at war, Aaron and Natalie, who by now has an infant son her husband has never seen, are interned as enemy aliens. Desperate, they run from one false haven to another in Italy and France until the Nazis spring the final trap and they are imprisoned first in Theresienstadt, and then in Auschwitz, where Aaron dies in the gas chamber. Natalie and her child survive and are reunited with young Byron Henry to the strains of *"Rozhinkes mit Mandlen."*

INVARIABLY, the sentimentality that blights his fictional episodes is absent from Wouk's straightforward use of the historical record, and it is very much to his credit that he does not reduce the Nazi destruction of the Jews to the mawkish platitudes of Gerald Green's *Holocaust*. Particularly in his account of the so-called Great Beautification in Theresienstadt, the supposedly privileged camp for *Prominente*, he writes with bitter and moving restraint. Before the visit of Danish Red Cross observers, the SS constructed a hoax in the camp, a bogus façade of *Gemütlichkeit* that fooled the Danes completely. While they announced to the world that Theresienstadt was indeed what the Nazis claimed—"a comfortable and happy residential town"—the stage-set was struck and the inmates of the "Paradise Ghetto" were shipped to Auschwitz.

Wouk is far less assured in dealing with Roosevelt's refugee policy of inaction. Committed as he is to historical facts, Wouk can scarcely overlook Roosevelt's disgraceful silence and procrastination, particularly his failure to act on the Wagner-Rogers Bill, which could have prevented the slaughter of thousands of Jewish children by admitting them into the United States. But Wouk, like his stalwart creature of fantasy, Victor Henry, cannot shake off his affection for Roosevelt. When the President persuades Captain Henry to undertake a difficult mission to Moscow, Wouk adds: "A love for President Roosevelt welled up in his heart as they shook hands. He tasted the acrid pleasure of sacrifice, and the pride of measuring up to the Commander-in-Chief's opinion of him." Despite his faith in documents and records, Wouk cannot bring himself to acknowledge the full shame of Roosevelt's failure to deal with the refugee problem.

The reason for Wouk's generosity toward FDR is clear: in unabashed dissent from the mainstream of American novelists today, for whom the only credible hero is the anti-hero, he remains an unembarrassed believer in such "discredited" forms of commitment as valor, gallantry, leadership, patriotism. Such unfashionable convictions will predictably strike many reviewers of *War and Remembrance* as at best naive, at worst absurdly out of touch with the Catch-22 lunacy of all war, including the war against Hitler. It is precisely to confute such facile and ahistorical cynicism that Wouk devotes so large and sober a part of his novel to the Final Solution and the ideological poison that overwhelmed the German people during Hitler's twelve years of power. In an ingenious device, Wouk interrupts his romance and naval battles at intervals with excerpts from a military history of the war written in prison by the imaginary German general Armin von Roon, which Victor Henry translates and edits after his retirement from the navy. In this brilliant simulation of the Nazi military mind, Wouk includes an unforgettable image of Hitler in the last weeks of the war, snarling and raging, uncontrollably flatulent, cackling maniacally at the execution films of the generals who failed in their plot, blaming everyone for Germany's defeat but himself.

BUT the most powerfully rendered episodes in *War and Remembrance* are not the portraits of historical individuals but the meticulously documented accounts of the great navy victories at Midway and Leyte Gulf. Even when he is simply ticking off the different kinds of vessels engaged in a single huge operation, Wouk's proud

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voice swells into a hallelujah chorus, with text from *Jane's Fighting Ships*. Describing the armada that sailed from Britain to invade North Africa in 1942, he exults:

> Not since the Japanese Imperial Fleet had set out for Midway, and before that never in all history, had the oceans of earth borne such a force. Aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, troop transports, and newfangled landing ships crammed full of small craft, tanks, trucks, and mobile guns; also destroyers, minesweepers, submarines, and assorted supply vessels; from several directions, in far-flung formations, these warships of frowning shapes and many sizes, painted gray or in gaudy camouflage colors, were crawling the watery curve of the planet.

It is a piquant irony that Wouk intends his saga of World War II to demonstrate that "war is an old habit of thought . . . that must now pass as human sacrifice and human slavery have passed," yet nothing stirs him to such rapture as the complex choreography of great ships in combat. The paradox is not lost on him. As he remarks during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, Victor Henry "was filled with exaltation that was half-guilty because the business was only slaughter, and many Americans might die, and yet he was so damned happy about it." At such moments all thought of ends and means is dissipated in the exhilaration of battle, and the elegies must wait until later.

HERMAN WOUK dedicated *The Winds of War* to his sons with the somber Hebrew injunction *zachor* —remember. It is impossible to deny the dignity and decency that inform Wouk's sense of this moral obligation, which sustained his prodigious effort of research and writing between 1962 and 1978. Yet *War and Remembrance* still cannot by any valid standard be judged a successfully realized work of literature. What is bad about this often very good bad book is not Wouk's passionate conviction that the defeat of Nazi Germany and its Japanese ally was the just cause of the war, but the sad evidence that he cannot free his imagination from the stale and debilitating conventions of popular fiction. The factual accuracy that Wouk guarantees his readers is admirable in a work of history, but does it also enrich the imaginative human life in a work of fiction? I very much doubt it, since with all the good will, moral passion, and finicky adherence to the facts displayed in Herman Wouk's epic of the war, the drama enacted by his navy family never rises above the sentimental level of best-selling romance.

FOR every buyer willing to part with fifteen dollars for *War and Remembrance*—all things considered, it's a bargain—there seems to be another shelling out only two-fifty less for Mario Puzo's *Fools Die*.* Nothing succeeds like success, and on the strength of Puzo's phenomenal killing with *The Godfather* (along with the two, soon to be three, movies spun from that monstrously absorbing romance of murder) the fountain seems unlikely to run dry. One doubts whether government regulations about consumer fraud apply to the "gentleman's trade" of publishing, but it must be time they did. Like some brands of radial tire, this book should be recalled. What buyers of *Fools Die* will discover before they've yawned through ten pages is the dismaying fact that it is no *Godfather*—not even a good-bad book but a slovenly dud. There is no plot, no action beyond an inexplicable suicide early on, which is, I think, meant to swell in deep symbolic resonance throughout the book. But what it symbolizes beyond Puzo's inability to figure out what it symbolizes remains an untantalizing mystery.

Fools Die opens in Las Vegas, and Puzo does write at length about gambling, but that is not what this novel is about. What stirs Mario Puzo the writer is not the luck of the draw but rage against the high-handed literary big shots who have denied him the stature of an artist. In an effort to settle the score with these emperors of sensibility, he draws up a list of the ten "most ridiculous" books ever written (Proust, all of Hardy, no surprises here), pelts the reader with pithy *aperçus* about the labor of literary creation ("It was fucking hard work and a pain in the ass in the bargain"), and grinds out the obligatory caricature of Norman Mailer (is there a hack left who hasn't hacked away at Mailer?). Though he makes some half-hearted feints at probing "the evil that lurked in the heart of man," Puzo is mired in the frustration boiling away in the heart of the millionaire *shlockmeister* who yearns for the sweet cultural delights of serious critical attention.

Since even the author of *The Godfather* can scarcely be cynical enough to assume that millions of readers will uncomplainingly swallow a novel that is nothing but a long and boring howl against the "classy literary world," Puzo stops gnashing his teeth now and again to grind out the expected goodies about sex, Hollywood, and gambling in Las Vegas. His novelist-narrator, modestly named Merlyn, has a doomed affair with gorgeous Janelle, a Barbie-doll actress who is bisexual and a feminist to boot; I can't remember whether she can cook too. Nothing he writes about Hollywood could not just as easily be happening in Flatbush, give or take a swimming pool or two. Indeed, the book is such a disorderly grab bag of random anecdotes that practically any of these nuggets could be omitted without making a particle of difference.

The single exception to all this floundering is Puzo's familiar pop-novelist urge to teach us things we would otherwise not easily learn. Like his fellow *mavens*, Puzo believes that specialized information about the customs of an arcane country, preferably lurid—first the Mafia, now gambling in Las Vegas —is a negotiable substitute for talent and bestows an air of high seriousness on low-minded kitsch. Thus *The Godfather* was not only a riveting story but a guided tour through the Sicilian "families" gunning each other down for control of the rackets. The fact that Puzo had no first-hand knowledge of the bloody underworld he charted with such seeming authenticity, that it was by hearsay out of imagination and much of it probably spurious, is beside the point of

* Putnam, 572 pp., $12.50.

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such books. If it sounds right, it *is* right.

In *Fools Die* the expert informs us at length about the inner workings and devious mores of the garish Vegas oasis. Since Puzo is apparently a Las Vegas regular, this time the lecturer is not in the least dependent on invention, and he tells us a great deal, often in impenetrable argot, about baccarat, roulette, crap shooting, scamming, hookers, and the protocol of croupier behavior. Soon dispelled, however, are any Dostoevskyan parallels which the wealth of gambling lore and Puzo's effort to explore the psychology of a "degenerate gambler" may be meant to suggest, for despite all the information he generously deals out, he does not begin to confront Dostoevsky's real subject, which was not the game itself but the tormented soul of the gambler.

Except for these gobs of fact, *Fools Die* is a tedious fake. The calculus of Puzo and his publishers, therefore, may have gone something like this: if multitudes could gobble up *The Godfather* without a qualm about its sentimental pornography of violence, why should the public balk at simple dullness? Yet it is precisely the crashing bore that may turn away customers looking for escape and excitement, not moral niceties. It will be interesting to see what effect the frenetically exorbitant prices that paperback publishers are paying these days—*Fools Die* went for $2.2 million—will eventually have on pop fiction. Since the bidding takes place months before the hard-cover edition is published and reviewed, what actually goes on the block is not a particular novel but its author's proven ability to sell. At this rate, there may be so many duds like Puzo's littering the counters that the secret will out—these novels do not entertain—and no one will want to buy them. Popular novelists would then once again be forced to do the job right, with some measure of the "sheer skill" Orwell admired, because the iron law of diminishing returns would make it harder for the likes of Mario Puzo to get away with a book more accurately titled *Fools Buy*.

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Books in Review

In the Great Tradition

A DISTANT MIRROR: THE CALAMITOUS 14th CENTURY. By BARBARA W. TUCHMAN. *Knopf. 677 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by
DAVID HERBERT DONALD

IN 1948 the American Historical Association conducted a poll to identify the six greatest American historians who were no longer living. The final list included only one scholar who had received regular graduate training and held a Ph.D. degree in history. All the others were self-taught historians who had made names for themselves despite—or perhaps because of—their lack of formal professional credentials.

These days, when the historians' world seems so completely dominated by the products of the graduate schools, it is chastening to remember the outcome of that survey. The great tradition in American history, we need to remind ourselves, is not one nurtured in our graduate seminars. Instead it has been fostered by dedicated amateur historians from George Bancroft, William H. Prescott, and Francis Parkman in the 19th century, to Henry Adams and James Ford Rhodes at the beginning of this century, down to Allen Nevins and Bruce Catton in our own day. (The name of Samuel Eliot Morison really belongs in this list too. Though equipped with indisputable professional credentials, he disdained the petty squabbles of academic historians and retained to the end the amateur's excited devotion to his subject.)

Any future list of truly great American historians will include the name of another self-taught scholar, Barbara W. Tuchman. Since the publication of her first book, *Bible and Sword* (1956), she has shown a steadily ripening talent. My own favorite among Mrs. Tuchman's books, *The Zimmerman Telegram* (1958), was as carefully plotted and as suspenseful as any detective story. Popular success came to Mrs. Tuchman in 1962, with the appearance of *The Guns of August,* a panoramic survey of the outbreak of of World War I. It deservedly won a Pulitzer Prize. Though lacking so clear a focus, *The Proud Tower* (1966) was an immensely readable "portrait of the world before the War, 1890-1914." In 1971 Mrs. Tuchman published *Stilwell and the American Experience in China,* which won her second Pulitzer Prize. Now, in *A Distant Mirror,* she has deserted the contemporary scene to portray "the calamitous 14th century." With more than 100,000 copies already in print, in addition to those distributed by three major book clubs, her new book may well reach a larger audience than any other serious work of history published in our time.

A Distant Mirror is a spacious portrait of an age that was at once wholly different from our own and yet, in odd and unexpected ways, curiously similar to our times. In the 14th century, as today, men lived with the possibility that the entire human race might be exterminated—then by the Black Death, which reduced the population of Europe by 50 per cent in five decades; now by atomic radiation. Both the 14th and the 20th centuries were drained by endless and usually pointless warfare, which "would develop a life of its own, defying parleys and truces and treaties designed to stop it," and which would drag on, past the lives of its originators "into their sons' lives and the lives of their grandsons and great-grandsons, and great-great-grandsons to the fifth generation." Both centuries witnessed a crisis of faith, a loss of confidence in man's "capacity to construct a good society." "The experiences of the terrible 20th century," Mrs. Tuchman suggests, ought to make us better able to understand the "violent, tormented, bewildered, suffering, and disintegrating" 14th century.

But Mrs. Tuchman is less concerned with tracing 14th-century parallels to our own times than with recreating the tortured complexity of life in that distant era. If the age "seemed full of brilliance and adventure to a few at the top," to most people it offered

> a succession of wayward dangers; of . . . pillage, plague, and taxes; of fierce and tragic conflicts, bizarre fates, capricious money, sorcery, betrayals, insurrections, murder, madness, and the downfall of princes; of dwindling labor for the fields, of cleared land reverting to waste; and always the recurring black shadow of pestilence carrying its message of guilt and sin and the hostility of God.

The fascination of Mrs. Tuchman's account of the 14th century lies less in its overall design, or argument, than in its vivid recreation of scenes and details. For instance, instead of generalizing about, or lamenting over, the inequitable distribution of wealth, she juxtaposes two scenes. First she enumerates the dishes served at a royal banquet:

> [R]oast capons and partridges, civet of hare, meat and fish aspics, lark pasties and rissoles of beef marrow, black puddings and sausages, lampreys and savory rice, entremet of swan, peacock, bitterns, and heron . . ., pasties of venison and small birds, fresh- and salt-water fish with a gravy of shad . . ., white leeks with

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plovers, duck with roast chitterlings, stuffed pigs, eels reversed, frizzled beans—finishing off with fruit wafers, pears, comfits, medlars, peeled nuts, and spiced wine.

A few pages later she describes the subjects of the same ruler, ground down by taxes, oppression, war, and famine, who became so desperate for food that they "cut open bodies with their knives and ate like animals the flesh of baptized men."

In *A Distant Mirror,* more than in any of her previous books, Mrs. Tuchman emerges as a gifted, often witty, aphorist. One could compile a little anthology of astute sayings from her observations on society in the 14th century, beginning with her characterization—quoted from a contemporary poem—of the knight as "a terrible worm in an iron cocoon." After listing urine and goat dung among the medicines prescribed by 14th-century physicians, she observes: "The offensive, like the expensive, had extra value." "Theology being the work of males," she notes, "original sin was traced to the female." Then she adds shrewdly: "The nastiness of women was generally perceived at the close of life when a man began to worry about hell, and his sexual desire in any case was failing."

Wise, witty, and wonderful, A *Distant Mirror* is a great book, in a great historical tradition. It deserves the enthusiastic popular applause it has already received.

Yet it is safe to predict that *A Distant Mirror* will have, at best, a mixed reception from scholars, who have not generally been kind to Mrs. Tuchman. The prestigious *American Historical Review,* for example, did not find her first book worth reviewing, and its brief notice of *The Zimmerman Telegram* ended: "One wishes there were some way to make thoroughly reliable history as excitingly readable as this book." Praise for Mrs. Tuchman's literary artistry in *The Guns of August* was canceled by an attack on *The Proud Tower* as "a pastiche," marred by the author's "fascination with trivia and her soporific tone." A scholarly review of her Stilwell biography contained the warning: "Despite, or because of, its broad compass, this mass-market historiography breaks certain rigorous research rules."

In part the negative tone of scholarly comment on Mrs. Tuchman's books is attributable to the fact that she—like so many of the other great figures in American historiography—is not a professional historian. The use of that term seems inescapable, if not a little ironic. The late Bruce Catton, who was often called an amateur historian by the teachers of history and the authors of monographs who reviewed his books, used to say, a bit impatiently, that he, more than any of his critics, ought to be considered a professional historian; unlike them, he made the writing of history his full-time occupation, from which he derived his livelihood. Mrs. Tuchman could well say the same. But she is the object of suspicion because she did not undergo structured, advanced training in historical research and does not hold a Ph.D. degree in history. Consequently she does not belong to the historians' professional guild. Instead, with a good undergraduate education at Radcliffe College, where she majored in English history, she simply taught herself how to write. When she began her first book, she said in a recent interview, "I just sat down and started it all by myself. I didn't have any advice. . . . But you know it never occurred to me that I couldn't do it as well as anyone else." The fact that she has done it so well gives a special venom to the attacks made on her by academic historians.

In all fairness, though, it must be said that academic historians tend to resent Mrs. Tuchman not merely because of her success but because of her ability to set her own rules for playing the game of history. Seeking no appointment, promotion, or academic honor, Mrs. Tuchman can afford to move from field to field—from European to Chinese history, from the 20th to the 14th century. A professor who thus wandered over the historical map would be considered at best eccentric and almost certainly would be condemned as superficial. Looking for the approval of a broad reading public, and not that of a handful of her

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RACHEL'S LEGACY

by HILA COLMAN

The Ginsbergs—Mama, Rachel, Esther, and Ida—arrive at Ellis Island with hope for the future. Rachel, in particular, yearns to be someone of importance. Only fourteen, she gets a job in a clothing factory. In four years shrewdness and determination have led her to a partnership in her own company. Rachel, a character based on the author's mother, is a woman of enviable strength and talent. The portrayal of her marriage to Abe and her bond to mother and sisters brim with feeling. What happens to the legacy of Rachel's hard work, however, is surprising. The only one who anticipates it is Rachel herself.

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peers, Mrs. Tuchman can boldly undertake a book on the Middle Ages, even though she admits that she is "not fluent in Latin" and for some sources "must depend on quotations and excerpts in English by other historians." No professor could afford to make that admission. Not interested in founding a new school of historical interpretation or in having her name connected with some novel thesis, Mrs. Tuchman is free to retell a story that may be entirely familiar to experts. The academic historian who follows well-trodden paths is likely to be called derivative.

I do not want to be understood as suggesting that Mrs. Tuchman has done no research, has no interest in ideas, and offers no interpretations. Those statements would all be entirely incorrect. Let me give an example of how, in a single paragraph in *A Distant Mirror*, Mrs. Tuchman combines fact, insight, and interpretation. First she describes a village game, where "players with hands tied behind them competed to kill a cat nailed to a post by battering it to death with their heads, at the risk of cheeks ripped open or eyes scratched out by the frantic animal's claws." This dreadfully specific instance is used to bolster Mrs. Tuchman's interpretation of the 14th century as an age of singular violence. Then she skillfully connects this horrible game with her knowledge of child-raising practices in the Middle Ages and speculates: "It may be that the untender medieval infancy produced adults who valued others no more than they had been valued in their own formative years." The paragraph is one that any academic historian could envy. My point remains, however, that Mrs. Tuchman is not fundamentally concerned with the novelty of the facts she presents and she does not particularly care whether previous historians have agreed or disagreed with her interpretation of the facts. She assumes, correctly, that both her facts and her interpretations will be fresh to the large audience to whom her work is primarily addressed.

EVEN though much of the academic criticism of Mrs. Tuchman's work is niggling and self-serving, some of it points to serious problems in her historical craftsmanship. There is, for example, the matter of the narrative form, to which Mrs. Tuchman, like most other non-academic historians, is deeply attached. "Narrative is the spine of what I do because that's the way life is lived," she declared recently; "it isn't lived in categories." It was a technique that worked well in her earlier books, where the sequence of world-shaking events was enormously important. It is far less effective in a study of 14th-century society, which changed slowly and almost imperceptibly. Academic historians have devised new, non-narrative literary strategies for dealing with what Fernand Braudel has called "this almost timeless history," but Mrs. Tuchman sticks to chronological sequence. At one point she admits that "inertia in the scales of history weighs more heavily than change," but she refuses to face the fact that it is impossible to write a compelling narrative about inertia.

In writing *A Distant Mirror*, Mrs. Tuchman might also have profited by giving serious thought to the reasons academic historians generally avoid the highly personalized, or biographical, approach. Again she is to some extent a prisoner of her previous successes. In *The Guns of August* and *The Proud Tower* she was able to sketch dazzling word portraits of individuals, who typified governments, groups, and classes. But for a study of the 14th century this method is necessarily less successful. There is no way, Mrs. Tuchman admits, to recreate the thought and character of the typical peasant—yet the huge majority of the whole European population consisted of peasants. In her book, consequently, the peasants "remain mute." "For no other class is that famous goal of the historian, *wie es wirklich war* (how it really was), so elusive. For every statement on peasant life there is another that contradicts it."

Desirous of tracing "the circumstances and the sequence of an actual medieval life," she has been obliged to choose a figure from the nobility, Enguerrand de Coucy VII, the "most experienced and skillful of all the knights of France." On first thought Coucy seems an admirable "vehicle"—the word is Mrs. Tuchman's—for a narrative account of at least the nobility during the last half of the 14th century. The lord of a princely domain in northern France, he was at once son-in-law of Edward III of England and the most trusted aide of the King of France. He held commands "in eleven campaigns—in Piedmont, Lombardy, Switzerland, Normandy, Languedoc, Tuscany, northern France, Flanders, Guelders, Tunisia, Genoa." He "commanded mercenaries, and fought as ally or antagonist of the Count of Savoy, Gregory XI, Hawkwood, the Visconti, the Hapsburgs, the Swiss, Navarrese, Gascons, English, Berbers, the Republic of Florence, and nobles of Genoa." As diplomat he negotiated "with Pope Clement VII, the Duke of Brittany, the Count of Flanders, the Queen of Aragon, with the English at peace parleys, and the rebels of Paris." As a leader in one of the last of the Crusades, he was taken prisoner by the Turks in the battle of Nicopolis, and he died in captivity at the end of his calamitous century.

Yet an academic historian could have alerted Mrs. Tuchman that far too little is known about Coucy, or any other individual, to make him the central figure in the story of the 14th century. No authentic portrait or statue of Coucy survives that shows his face; the one detail preserved about his physical appearance is that he became bald. Though Froissart and the other chroniclers of the Hundred Years' War repeatedly praised Coucy as "the most gracious and persuasive lord in all Christendom," nothing remains of his utterances or ideas. Lacking information, Mrs. Tuchman is often obliged to resort to speculation. Her pages are sprinkled with information that Coucy may have known and with events that "doubtless" he participated in. Even the ending of her story has to be conditional: "Perhaps he recognized in the Battle of Nicopolis a profound failure of knighthood and sensed in its outcome a time to die."

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More serious is the literary distortion that the focus on Coucy causes in *A Distant Mirror*. Though Coucy was indeed involved in nearly all the political, military, and diplomatic struggles of his age, his role was always a secondary one, and Mrs. Tuchman's sense of proportion prevents her from exaggerating his importance. In order, then, properly to set forth the actions of her hero, she has been obliged to write a history of the Hundred Years' War nearly as long and detailed as Froissart's *Chronicles*. The result is a bit like a map of the United States drawn on a scale to show the streets of Cos Cob, Mrs. Tuchman's town in Connecticut. At times Mrs. Tuchman herself seems to realize that her biographical narrative is getting out of hand. After hundreds of pages describing knightly festivities, banquets, and tournaments, she writes wearily, "These extravaganzas recur so regularly that astonishment fades." So does interest.

IF Mrs. Tuchman could only write narrative history with a biographical focus, the weaknesses of the last half of *A Distant Mirror* would be easier to accept. But, as she demonstrates in her first six chapters, dealing with the cult of chivalry, with medieval warfare, and with the Black Death, she can write superb social history without having to rely on a chronological framework and without having to drape events around a single individual. It is truly regrettable that a historian of Mrs. Tuchman's genius has not been in close, constant communication with academic scholars, who might have helped her in reconsidering the basic structure of her book.

The moral is, I trust, obvious: academic and non-academic historians need each other. If academic historians ought to emulate Mrs. Tuchman's sweep, grace, and insight, Mrs. Tuchman could learn something from academic historians about technique, focus, and scope. It is time to remind ourselves of the message of Allan Nevins's presidential address before the American Historical Association: "We are all amateurs, we are all professionals."

Touched by Trotskyism

JAMES T. FARRELL: THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST YEARS. By ALAN M. WALD. *New York University Press. 190 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by HERMAN BELZ

IF IT is a peculiarity of American academic historiography that it has given inordinate attention to insignificant left-wing political movements, it is perhaps less peculiar that the relationship between radicalism and literature should come under continuing examination. A good argument can be made that the experience of radicalization has had a significant effect on the development of a modern literary and cultural sensibility in 20th-century America. Literary radicalism has been the subject of several able works, the main point of which has been to show the dynamic process that carried many writers and intellectuals through a period of active left-wing engagement to the more rewarding and satisfying artistic and intellectual integrity that came with detachment from politics. As perhaps prime example one may cite Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left*, a work that, despite its sympathetic understanding of the motives that drew intellectuals into Communist circles, shows the deleterious consequences of radical involvement.

Alan Wald's little book on James T. Farrell contrasts—and compares unfavorably—with the standard works on literary radicalism by Aaron and James B. Gilbert. For Wald attempts to show the uniformly positive effects of radicalism—in particular, of Trotsky's revolutionary socialism—on American letters in the 1930's. He argues the case for the moral and intellectual

HERMAN BELZ *is professor of history at the University of Maryland. His most recent book is* Emancipation and Equal Rights (*Norton*).

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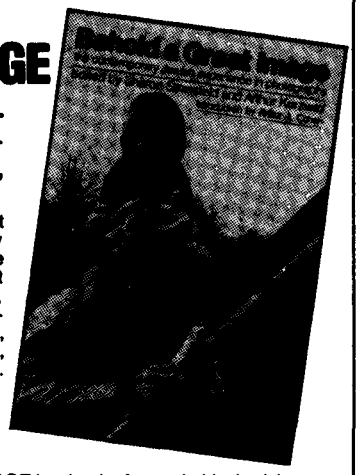

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contribution of Trotskyism by analyzing Farrell's literary and political career from 1930 to 1948.

The specific historical problem that Wald addresses is the phenomenon, as he calls it, of a native American realist in his most productive years being attracted to the international revolutionary ideas of Trotsky; Farrell has never been studied, Wald observes, as a Marxist literary theoretician. New York intellectuals provide a sub-theme of the book. A few years ago, a survey revealed that six of the eleven top-rated intellectuals in the United States were, in Wald's phrase, "touched by Trotskyism." Wald uses this fact to underscore the importance of studying Trotsky's influence on American intellectuals, and he sees Farrell, a leading organizer and spokesman for literary Trotskyists in the 1930's, as illustrating this influence.

Wald describes Farrell's entrance into radical politics in the early 1930's and his collaboration with the Communist party, followed by his growing disenchantment with and rejection of the Stalinist view of literature and politics. The Communists held that art must serve politics in a narrow and specific sense by educating the masses. Farrell, in contrast, insisted not on the autonomy of art but rather on the necessity of the artist's pursuing his artistic vision without regard to extra-literary standards or purposes. He believed that literary works must transcend the advocacy of immediate political positions. Wald argues that as Farrell deepened and refined these insights, he came increasingly under the influence of Trotsky, who himself had written that the artist must not be bound by narrow party dogmatics. Professing a true understanding of Marx, Trotsky and his American followers believed that authentic art, freed from totalitarian restraints and expressing the need for a full existence (of the kind which class society made impossible), would contribute to the revolution.

FARRELL broke with the Communists in 1936 to embark upon a Trotskyist political course that continued until 1948. The chapters covering these years form the heart of the book, and Wald, in a pedestrian style that sometimes has the effect, though not the intention, of the mock-heroic, tells of the novelist's participation in left-wing literary wars, his service on the Trotsky Defense Committee and support of the Dewey Commission in Mexico City, his increasingly active involvement in the Socialist Workers (Trotskyist) party. Wald makes much of the fact that Farrell pertinaciously adhered to Trotskyism long after most other intellectuals had repudiated it. He sees this adherence, however, not as something that needs to be explained but as something to be praised. Finally, however, in reaction to Soviet expansionism, Farrell rejected revolutionary Marxism in 1948.

Wald sees as his distinctive contribution the argument that Farrell's acceptance of Trotskyism made him a better writer. Farrell's literary achievement, he asserts, cannot be fully understood without taking into account his Marxism and Trotskyism. There is undoubtedly some truth in this assertion, but it does not require us to revise the conclusion of earlier scholars that the principal and decisive intellectual influence in Farrell's work was a native American individualism that insisted on the possibility of self-transcendence and self-improvement. Farrell's novels and criticism evinced these liberal values, and so did his eventual rejection of Trotskyism. Wald is either unwilling or unable to recognize this fact.

While not denying Farrell's liberal pragmatism, Wald is mainly eager to present Trotskyism as an intellectually and spiritually liberating force. Accordingly, he sees beneficial results flowing from the writer's commitment to revolutionary Marxism. These positive effects are to be seen not so much in Farrell's writings as in the inspiration and strength that he absorbed from Trotsky, which sustained him in his struggles against the Stalinists and later against the promoters of war hysteria in the 1940's. "No doubt Farrell thought of Trotsky and how he bore his exile," Wald says, "as he himself stood increasingly alone." Without minimizing the difficulties Farrell experienced, one can say that Wald betrays a lack of historical judgment and discrimination in seeing Farrell's "exile" as comparable to Trotsky's. Wald also shows a lack of discrimination in constantly referring to Farrell as a "revolutionary socialist," as though he really were a revolutionary (like Trotsky) rather than a writer participating in a soul-satisfying but politically irrelevant charade.

Wald states that Farrell did not fully embrace Trotskyism, but he is not convincing in making this point because he himself is as uncritical of Trotsky as Farrell was. Wald fairly glorifies Trotsky as the theorist and prophet of revolution, as a critic of Stalinism, and as an apostle of intellectual freedom. He calls Trotsky "a Promethean champion of truth." To be sure, Trotsky denounced Soviet tyranny in the 1930's, but to see this as anything other than the bitterest fruit of Trotsky's political defeat a decade earlier is to misunderstand the nature of Leninism and its legacy in Russian politics. Leninism, as Alfred G. Meyer has observed, was inherently totalitarian, and Stalin, in his insistence on the primacy of the party, stress on cultural transformation, and ruthlessness in implementing policies, fulfilled the logic of Lenin's rule. But Trotsky, though not equal to Stalin in the struggle for power, was to an equal degree contemptuous of democratic principles. Only after he lost out to Stalin did he argue for a measure of intraparty democracy. And for all his subsequent anti-Stalinism, Trotsky in 1917-20 was as ruthlessly dictatorial as Lenin. Whether Trotsky would, like Stalin, have grasped the full totalitarian solution to the problem of political power must remain a matter of conjecture. But from the standpoint of democratic principles of political action the question is irrelevant. Considered in this light, the difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism is a distinction without a difference.

WALD's larger concern is the significance of Trotskyism in American intellectual life. It is not exactly clear what he thinks that was, other than that Trotsky served as a romantic inspiration for a few hundred intellectuals who longed

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for a revolution that, if it had actually occurred, would no doubt have destroyed the critical intellectual enterprise they believed in. Wald fails to see that Trotskyism was significant principally as an intermediate step in the rejection of Communism. Except for a few persistent ideologues, Trotskyism was functionally a form of anti-Communism which, by the early 1940's, as more intellectuals came to appreciate the undemocratic nature of revolutionary Marxism in *all* its sectarian manifestations, evolved into a categorical repudiation of Communism. The intellectuals who made this judgment were those identified especially with *Partisan Review* and later COMMENTARY and *Dissent*. As for the half-dozen preeminent American intellectuals who Wald says were touched by Trotskyism (Mary McCarthy, Irving Howe, Dwight Macdonald, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson), the point is not that their embrace of revolutionary socialism gave distinctive direction to their work, but that they all rejected Trotskyism because it did violence to intellectual integrity and democratic values.

Dwight Macdonald thought Farrell remained a fellow-traveler too long, oblivious to the anti-democratic nature of Trotskyism. Perhaps so. Eventually Farrell did break away, and, as he wrote in 1954, rejected Trotsky's view that art must ultimately be judged by an arbitrary criterion based on the ideological hegemony of the party. That at least is how Farrell evaluated Trotsky's position on literature and politics in 1954. Wald, however, ignores this kind of evidence on the ground that he must confine his attention to Farrell's revolutionary-socialist years. The decision to do so seems as much political as intellectual. Concerned to show the positive value of Trotskyism, Wald looks at only a segment of the dynamic historical process in which Farrell and other writers were involved. One cannot say Wald is unaware of having taken an exceedingly narrow view of his subject, even though it vitiates his historical judgment. Indeed, he candidly states that the purpose of his book "is to revivify [Farrell's] dynamic role in the literary Left, in the American experience with Marxist thought, and in the struggle of writers and intellectuals to forge an effective role for themselves in the movement for revolutionary social change. . . ." That, I suppose, is what radical scholarship is all about.

In explaining why he has concentrated on Farrell's revolutionary-socialist period, Wald also says that the issues of the cold-war era, when Farrell finally rejected Trotskyism, were different from those of the 1930's. But that manifestly is not true. The fundamental issue was the same all along. That issue, as Dwight Macdonald wrote in 1957, was the necessity of making a lesser-evil choice between the imperfect democracy of the West and the perfected tyranny of the Communists. Farrell at length made the correct choice, but one would never know it from this book.

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The Gambler

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY. By ANWAR AL-SADAT. *Harper & Row. 315 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by BARRY RUBIN

ANWAR SADAT has always been a gambler. It is a quality which made him an unsuccessful underground conspirator in the 1940's, but it appears to be a necessary characteristic for anyone seeking to govern Egypt in the 1970's. Indeed, Sadat has taken three major risks in the last twelve months alone: the celebrated trip to Jerusalem, the Camp David agreements, and the attempt to move Egypt toward greater democratization, albeit with many restrictions and limitations. Before that, he broke with the powerful pro-Soviet section of the Egyptian elite in 1971, expelled the Soviet advisers in 1972, and launched a war against Israel in 1973.

To understand why Sadat has taken such chances, it is useful to consider both the internal and the external condition of his country. On the one hand, Egypt has for centuries been politically separate from the rest of the Arab world. The country possesses natural boundaries, a strong pre-Islamic (and hence pre-Arab) tradition of its own, and a unique set of problems. Thus there has been a long heritage of Egyptian nationalism which sees little interest—or advantage—in pan-Arab schemes. As Sa'd Zaghlul, the founder of the Wafd party and Egypt's great nationalist hero, told the Versailles peace conference in 1919: "Our problem is an Egyptian problem and not an Arab problem."

On the other hand, the idea that Egypt was fated to lead the Arab world has exerted a strong pull on those in power in Cairo. "Nature has endowed Egypt with every characteristic and advantage which prescribes as a duty its assumption of the leadership in the awakening of Arab nationalism," wrote the pan-Arabist, Sati al-Husri, in 1936. The development of the Palestine question was central in moving Egypt toward taking up the glorious burden of Arab leadership. Gamal Nasser attributed to it his first stirrings of Arab consciousness when he was a schoolboy, even though he did not understand "why I was angry for this land which I never saw. . . ."

Today, many Egyptians have come once again to share this perplexity. When the Free Officers took power in 1952, Nasser defined Egypt's role as one of active leadership of the Arab, Islamic, and African blocs. Two decades of efforts in this direction brought few benefits to Egypt. The attempted merger with Syria was a failure, and the wars with Israel and in North Yemen were bloody disasters. The June 1967 defeat plunged Egypt into the depths of depression and humiliation.

When Nasser died in 1970, the country was in virtual economic and military receivership, dependent on handouts from the oil-producing states to maintain its large military expenditures. This weakness allowed the Russians to gain influence in the country. The time had come, Sadat believed, for a new definition of Egyptian identity, symbolized by his abandonment of the name, "United Arab Republic." Sadat has continued to stress Egypt's Arab nature, but he has also sought to serve Egypt's own needs apart from foreign adventures and foreign commitments.

The serious domestic situation has also played a role in Egypt's crisis of orientation. Politically, Egypt is a remarkably stable state compared with other Arab countries. Yet its rapidly increasing population, strained resources, and inefficient economy spell danger. Over the last two years, the Egyptian elite has been going through one of its periodic frights over the prospect of revolution. The January 1977 food riots, and the growth of "leftist" and "rightist" extremist groups, often financed by Libya, have caused serious concern. An

BARRY RUBIN *is staff associate at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies.*

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important dividend of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem has been the opening up of Western sources of loans, investments, and military supplies. Peace remains a precondition of any real economic progress.

ALL his life, Sadat has been willing to do whatever he has deemed necessary to gain Egypt's independence. During the 1940's, he worked with both the Nazis and Muslim Brotherhood, while under Nasser he played a small role in constructing the Egyptian alliance with the USSR. In this and other respects, Sadat has always been a professional survivor. He was virtually the only leading member of the Free Officers who never openly broke with Nasser, and so slavish was he to Nasser that many underestimated his own capabilities as a potential leader.

During those years, Sadat drew many lessons which shape his attitudes today. Although Nasser was virtually worshiped in large parts of the Arab world, he gradually became the prisoner of events; Sadat calls this "the powerlessness of power." In 1967, for example, Nasser knew that his mobilization of troops and closure of the Gulf of Aqaba would lead to armed conflict with Israel, but he was so beguiled by his generals' reports and by the plaudits of the Arab world that he marched over the cliff.

Sadat also acquired an abiding mistrust of the USSR and a belief in the desirability of an alliance with the United States. Whereas Nasser concluded in 1956 that he had defeated the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion, Sadat knew it was President Eisenhower's intervention that turned the Suez crisis from a "military defeat into political victory" for Egypt. Again, Nasser's baiting of the United States in the 1960's led to the loss of desperately needed economic aid, throwing Cairo even further into Moscow's clutches.

After 1967, Sadat writes, it became plain that Moscow could not deliver peace, and that it was subordinating Egypt's interests to Soviet international strategy. Sadat came to realize that the United States held most of the cards in the Middle East, and that only Washington could act as intermediary between Egypt and Israel. At the same time, "It was impossible for the U.S. (or, indeed, any other power) to make a move if we ourselves didn't take military action to break the deadlock." This was the purpose of the October 1973 war, which set in train all the well-known events that followed it, up to and including Camp David.

SADAT's account of his life is interesting, among other reasons, for its many omissions and contradictions. It contains, for example, little or nothing on the domestic economic situation in his years of power. Furthermore, many of Sadat's statements about U.S. and Israeli policy and behavior in the 1950's and 1960's are wildly inaccurate. Again: while blaming Egypt's debacle in the Yemen civil war on Nasser's inept military commander, Abdel Hakim Amer, Sadat neglects to

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mention that he himself was in charge of political affairs with Yemen during this period. And so forth.

In his 1957 book, *Revolt on the Nile,* Sadat took a fairly hostile view of the Muslim Brotherhood, but now that he is courting the Islamic fundamentalists he has no criticisms to make. Sadat never mentions that he was one of three judges who conducted show trials of Brotherhood leaders in the 1950's after their attempt to assassinate Nasser. Further, in *Revolt on the Nile* Sadat denied that he or the Free Officers had been involved in terrorist activities. Now he not only discusses such activities in detail, but also claims participation in the murder of a pro-British Egyptian politician, a murder which in his first book he blamed on the Brotherhood.

Sadat has never hidden his collaboration with the Nazis during World War II. What is remarkable is that he has also never drawn any lessons from the involvement or made any apologies for it. A number of disparaging remarks about Jews appeared in the earlier volume; there are none in the autobiography.

HENRY KISSINGER once observed that the problem of Arab leadership was its inability—or unwillingness—to distinguish where epic poetry ends and reality begins. Sadat has had to make that distinction. After all, in 1977 the Sinai was still occupied, Egypt was still bearing the brunt of the Arab burden in the war against Israel, and the economy was badly in need of aid. There seems to have been little in Sadat's background that would have led one to expect him to become the architect of change. He had been the wildest and most romantic of the Free Officers. Yet it was precisely his convictions as an Egyptian nationalist coupled with his gambling instinct and his willingness to apply any means to reach his goals which enabled Sadat to travel the road to Camp David.

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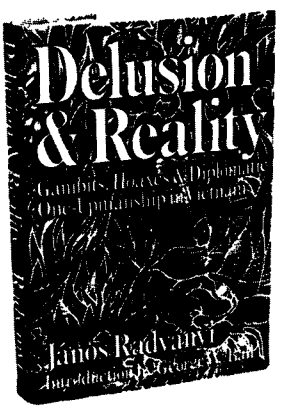

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Buying the Vote

POLITICAL CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY. By EDWARD R. TUFTE. *Princeton University Press. 168 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JAMES Q. WILSON

A FUNDAMENTAL, and still unanswered, question about democracy is whether it is compatible over the long run with a stable and healthy economy. The competitive struggle for popular votes that is the essence of democratic rule need not lead to the expropriation of private property (and in fact private property is more secure in democratic than in non-democratic regimes), but it can lead to the manipulation of the value of money, the schedule of taxes, and the amount and distribution of public expenditures so as to serve the short-term interests of politicians at the expense of the long-term interests of society. In short, the risk of democracy is that elected officials will try to buy votes.

At one time, such buying as occurred took place at the local level and face-to-face, in the form of political patronage and cash handouts. No one knows the total cost, in padded payrolls and sweetheart contracts, of such expenditures, but it is unlikely that they amounted to more than a tiny fraction of the gross national product. And, in any event, they were checked by the need of most local governments to have a balanced budget and were eventually reduced by the steady spread of municipal reform and the "good-government" movement. Though implicit vote-buying on the part of the national government was certainly evident in the 19th century—one thinks of the massive system of pensions paid to veterans of the Union army in ways that certainly did not hinder the good fortunes of the Republican party—the ability of Washington to do much of this, or to have by so doing much of an effect on the economy, was

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quite limited. As late as 1929, total federal expenditures were only 2.5 per cent of the gross national product. It would have taken massive increases in these payments, on a scale not even achieved by the New Deal until well into World War II, before any dramatic effect on the economy would be observed.

Today, when the federal government spends more than one-fifth of the GNP, the opportunities for influencing both the economy and the elections are obvious. Of late, a growing number of political scientists and economists have been attempting to see if there is a relationship, here and abroad, between the "political cycle" (that is, periodic elections) and the business cycle (the ups and downs of various measures of economic well-being). The most recent, lucid, and comprehensive of these studies is the brilliant book by Edward R. Tufte, a political scientist at Yale.

In his careful analysis of politics and the economy in several European and North American democracies, Tufte finds an impressive body of quantitative evidence consistent with the view that politicians in power stimulate the economy just before elections in order to enhance their prospects for being returned to office. Drawing on his own research as well as that of others, Tufte is able to show that what politicians have always believed was true is in fact true: the government can make decisions that will win votes. Though he is careful to note the influence of other factors—such as party loyalties, the impact of non-economic issues, and the role of a candidate's personality—he offers persuasive support for the view, long suspected by many scholars, that skillful officeholders are not simply the passive victims of inexplicable or purely emotional shifts in mood among voters, but can, to a significant degree, influence electoral outcomes. Indeed, this joining of academic and practical wisdom has now been institutionalized: in preparation for the 1972 election, economists in the Office of Management and Budget developed and tested elaborate statistical models to show the effect on voters of changes in net national product per capita and transmitted these results to John Ehrlichman and the White House political staff.

During the period 1961-72, Tufte finds that real disposable income increased faster during election years than non-election years in nineteen out of twenty-seven countries. In the United States, real disposable income per capita increased in eight of the eleven non-Eisenhower election years but in only two of the years without elections. Except in the Eisenhower years, the unemployment rate has been, on the average, one percentage point lower on election day than it was a year to a year-and-a-half earlier.

During the Eisenhower years, the administration deliberately pursued a policy of avoiding inflation and reducing the federal budget. This period produced, as a consequence, virtually the only exception since World War II to the pattern of increasing incomes and lower unemployment just before an election —a phenomenon Adlai Stevenson was to refer to as the "liberal hour" when, as popular votes are about to be cast, all but the sternest believers in fiscal restraint embrace the need to bolster the economy. Richard Nixon, for one, never forgot the Eisenhower exception to this pattern, ascribing his defeat in 1960 to the fact that the Republicans delivered the "pocketbook issue" over to the Democrats.

There is nothing very mysterious about how a party produces these stimulative effects. It is done chiefly by accelerating, in an election year, the amount of money spent on payments to individuals (chiefly, social-security and veterans' benefits) and on aid to states and cities. (Monetary policy—that is, altering the amount of money in circulation—is less clearly related to the election cycle, owing, no doubt, to the partial independence enjoyed by the Federal Reserve Board.) The money involved in the transfer payments is huge but, even more important, it is visible. Social-security benefits (OASDHI) were increased in 1950, 1952, 1954, and in most other elec-

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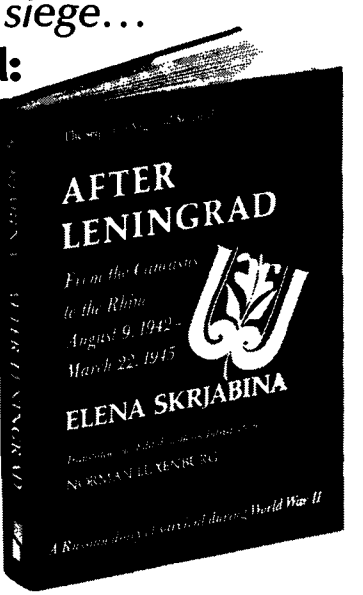

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tion years in a way that insured that millions of voters would get a larger check starting between June and October of an election year, accompanied by a printed notice of the increase that mentioned the name of the incumbent President. To insure that the voters' perception of governmental benevolence is not marred by any reminder that someone must pay for this, the social security taxes are not raised until the January *following* the election.

So also with veterans' benefits: they have increased an average of $660 million (at annual rates) in the third quarter of years with elections but only by one-third as much in years without elections. Grants to states and cities in the last quarter of 1972 were more than 50 per cent higher than they had been in the last quarter of 1971.

ONE might wonder why the government prefers increasing benefits to lowering taxes as a way of attracting public support. The answer is to be found in the politics of taxing as opposed to spending programs. Almost any tax bill raises complex issues generated by conflicts over who is to bear the burdens and receive the benefits; the current tax bill, with its protracted haggling over capital gains, tax rates, and personal deductions, illustrates how difficult it would be to provide a simple and timely boon to voters by lowering taxes. In comparison, raising social-security benefits is easy—millions will benefit immediately, almost everybody will appear to benefit ultimately, and the cost can be deferred for future generations to pay.

Moreover, the strategy of stimulus seems to work: Tufte summarizes a number of studies suggesting rather strongly that increases in real disposable income per capita produce measurable increases, in both off-year as well as presidential elections, in the votes received by the incumbents. A 1 per-cent improvement in real disposable income translates into a 1.3 per-cent increase in an incumbent President's popular vote. The party in power typically loses ground in off-year elections, but when disposable income is rising, that loss is much less.

IF ALL this is true, how does a party in power ever lose? Part of the answer, obviously, is the electoral impact of other issues—war, crime, civil rights. Moreover, some Presidents have felt inhibited about manipulating the economy for political purposes or believed that their personal popularity would see them through economic adversity.

For a long time, the incumbents may have been restrained from pursuing the "buy-votes" strategy by the offsetting need to maintain a balanced budget (except in times of national crisis). But Eisenhower seems to have been the last President to take that problem seriously; elite opinion, and perhaps mass opinion as well, is far more tolerant today of recurring deficits than formerly. Nixon entered office determined not to repeat Eisenhower's "mistakes." Gerald Ford, on the other hand, had not learned this lesson. He entered an election year determined to veto spending measures he regarded as excessive, either out of conviction or out of a need to counter the challenge from within his own party by Ronald Reagan, or both. The best Ford's frustrated political advisers could do was to speak bravely of how the President's principles forbade him from inflating the economy in order to win the election. Any port in a storm.

Indeed, the changes in the nature of party activists and the destruction of the formal machinery of political parties may have given a significant advantage to the Democrats in this regard. As Jeane J. Kirkpatrick has shown, both parties tend to be heavily influenced, in the presidential nominating conventions, by their more ideological members. But whereas the liberal ideologues in the Democratic party are strongly in favor of stimulating the economy and attach much less importance to inflation, the conservative ideologues in the Republican party favor reducing government expenditures and worry more about inflation than about unemployment. Should the activists in each party control the nominations, it is hard to see how a Republican President could win or, if he wins, be reelected—unless some issue (war, scandal) becomes, for the moment, more important than the economy. This was the case, of course, in 1952, 1956, 1968, and again in 1972, but it was not the case in 1976. Nixon tried to have it both ways—get elected on a conservative platform and reelected on a liberal one, and he pretty well succeeded. But Ford discovered that the militants in his party will tolerate expediency only so long and then they will insist on principle.

PEOPLE differ on how costly the conventional political strategy is in terms of economic dislocation. Tufte wisely notes that it would be easier to compare the politicized economy we have with the optimal economy we want if only we could agree on what that optimum is and how it might be achieved. Some believe that the stimulus-inducing tendency of electoral competition, coupled with the stimulus-favoring policies of most Left-liberal parties, will lead to a greater equalization of incomes and less unemployment. There are some data, by Douglas Hibbs and others, consistent with this view, but much of their force depends on the significance one attaches to rather small differences among capitalist nations in the degree of income inequality. Others either deny that these benefits result or argue that the price paid for them—high levels of inflation—will in the long run prove disastrous.

What can be said is that a politically-controlled economy operates on a stop-and-go, up-and-down basis created by the very short-time horizons of the officials in power. After an election, Presidents worry about "restoring business confidence" and controlling inflation; just before an election, they work on buying votes by stimulating the economy. The relentlessly optimistic at heart might see in this alternating cycle evidence that diverse interests are being served and thus that the democratic control of the economy really works. But they should recognize that the stimulus-generating incentives have steadily become more important to most elected officials, especially now that large peacetime budget deficits have become politically tolerable.

Tufte reviews a number of pos-

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sible remedies, all directed at decoupling the electoral and the economic cycles. Most he finds questionable, for all depend ultimately on persuading the electorate not to hold elected officials, especially the President, responsible for the state of the economy. It is hard to imagine how this might be done.

Liberating Gods

NIETZSCHE, HENRY JAMES, AND THE ARTISTIC WILL. By STEPHEN DONADIO. *Oxford University Press. 347 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by HAROLD BLOOM

THIS distinguished thematic study might be called parallel portraits of Nietzsche and Henry James, rightly linked here by their common Emersonian heritage. The portrait of James is persuasive; the likeness is precise and the critic's vision of the novelist has its own intensity and originality. That the portrait of Nietzsche should be more problematic is inevitable, because the philosopher of perspectivism is beyond the possibilities of thematic portraiture. Every positive assertion as to Nietzsche's "meaning" can be undone by an appeal to Nietzsche's own theories of rhetoric and of identity. But fortunately the interest and vitality of Donadio's book are invested elsewhere, in its reopenings of the complex relation between Emerson and the James family, and between Emerson and Nietzsche. What Donadio has done is to contribute to our nation's ongoing Emerson revival, and "the artistic will" he analyzes so well is probably more clearly shown in Emerson's "Art," the last of the *Essays—First Series,* than it ever is in Nietzsche or the James brothers. To Emerson, even the *Iliad* is of less value in itself than as a *sign of power,* and all pictures and statues are "cripples and monsters" in comparison to the essence of art: "Nothing less than the creation of man and nature is its end."

So outrageous is the power of this Emersonian will to power that even a sympathetic reader ought to be baffled by its extravagances. What can a philosopher or a novelist do with an ambition that "would carry art up into the kingdom of nature, and destroy its separate and contrasted existence"? Donadio's critical quest is to see just what Nietzsche and Henry James did to realize the prophecies of their impossible and inspiring precursor, whose impatience with the artistic will made him the forerunner to so many whose creative powers surpassed what the Concord sage himself possessed. Part of the strength of Donadio's book is that it suggests unwritten chapters on Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats, Lawrence, and a host of modern American poets, all of whom manifest the same relation to Emerson as is examined here in Nietzsche and James. Donadio quotes Nietzsche on Emerson:

> Emerson. I have never felt so much at home in a book, so much in my own house as,—I ought not to praise it; it is too close to me.

Indeed it was too close for Nietzsche to discuss comfortably. Emerson haunts *Zarathustra* (as do a crowd of other ghostly presences) and it sounds rather defensive when Nietzsche laments in a letter his precursor's lack of "a really *scientific education*" which causes us to "have *lost a philosopher.*" Zarathustra at his most oracular seems an indeliberate parody of Emerson, who kept always his Yankee cunning while glorying in self-contradiction. Nietzsche's self-contradictions seem as little self-deceptive as Emerson's but they are armored by explicit ironies founded upon the epistemological limitations of language, the instabilities of ego-identity, and the knowing bewilderments of perspectivism or shifting points-of-view. As these are aspects of Nietzsche that

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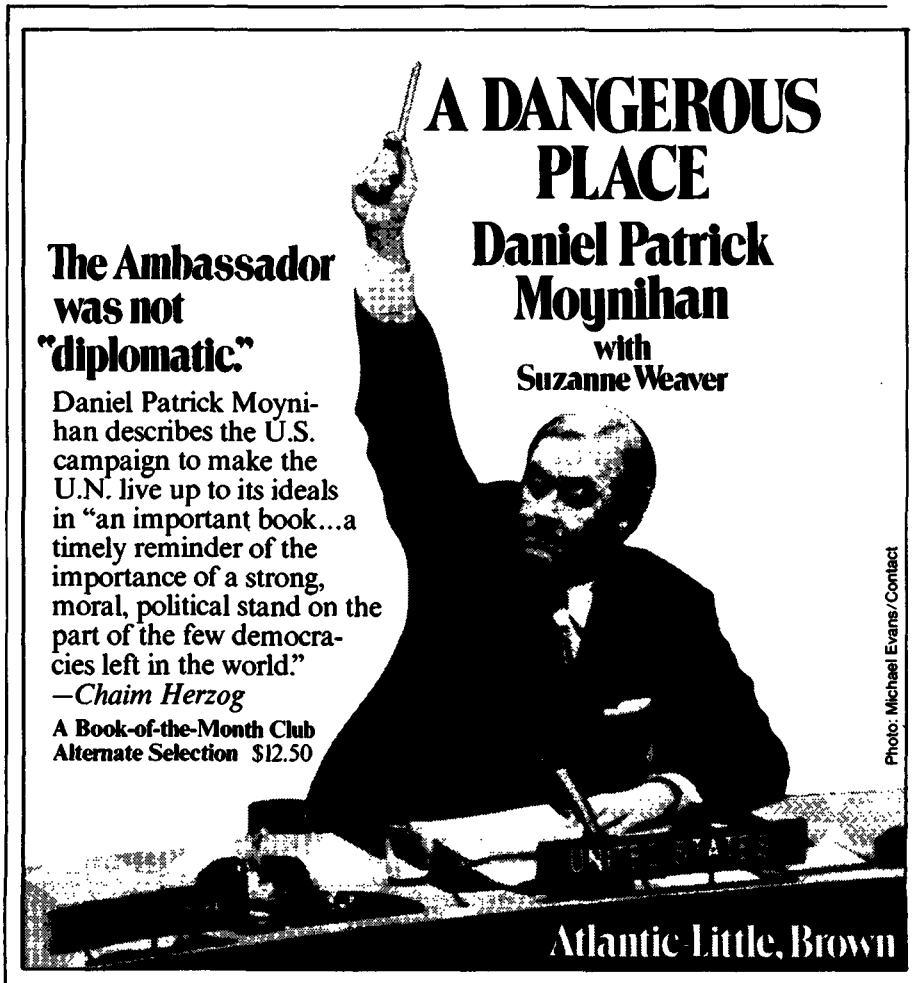
A DANGEROUS PLACE
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
with
Suzanne Weaver
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Donadio deliberately avoids (despite his discussion of perspectivism), we are denied what might have been a helpful exploration of why Nietzsche, rather than Emerson, has been so directly influential upon contemporary theorists of reading.

But what Donadio loses in speculative complexity, he gains in clarity of exposition. His summary of Nietzsche on the artistic will as being the poet's revenge against time has no surprises in it, but will be useful to many readers. More useful is his link between Nietzsche's notion of the "Good European" and Henry James's prophecy of the ideal American writer of the future, meaning Henry James. As Donadio says, the mutual ideal of the two writers "possesses the power to confer significant value on persons and experiences which in themselves reveal none."

Donadio is more advanced and more refreshingly a surprise when he moves from Nietzsche to Henry and William James, perhaps because his reading of the Americans is both fuller and more his own, less reliant upon authorities, but also because he conveys a richer sense of late 19th-century American culture as against its European counterpart. I am indebted to Donadio for his discussions of William James on sainthood, on immortality, and on indeterminism. Donadio's William James is a subtler and more shaded thinker than most perspectives have given us, and many readers will benefit by being reintroduced to this aspect of the philosopher.

Where Donadio excels is in his discussion of the "Prefaces" to Henry James's novels. The insights of R.P. Blackmur are extended and amplified by Donadio, through the vital context afforded him by Nietzsche. Donadio's best pages may be on *The Golden Bowl*, where Maggie Verver is convincingly exalted as a realization of the Emersonian and Nietzschean dream of art. Her success "is that it embraces two antithetical and ostensibly irreconcilable possibilities, for it represents a triumph in the actual world as well as a triumph of the spirit."

The most moving pages in Donadio's book come when he compares the two letters in the character of Napoleon dictated by Henry James, in the stroke-induced delirium of his final days, with the celebrated final letters of Nietzsche as he slipped into madness. Both writers surrender only to transcendent forces, "across the border," as James put it. The power of consciousness, having been taken as far as the artistic will can go, yields to what is neither an abyss nor a mystery, yet cannot be called a theism. Donadio makes the juxtaposition, but tactfully reaches no conclusions. Probably he defers to Emerson, who told us that: "The poets are thus liberating gods." Nietzsche's Zarathustra, for all his audacity a cautious European in comparison to the wilder Emerson, stated the dialectical and darker undersong:

> . . . if there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god! *Hence* there are no gods. Though I drew this conclusion, now it draws me.

But Emerson once said: "No sentence will hold the whole truth, and the only way in which we can be just, is by giving ourselves the lie." If there is a poetic will, and its products do testify to its glory, then Nietzschean renunciations and Freudian sublimations cannot reduce it wholly or forever. Donadio moves me because his book, though it honors Nietzsche, tacitly endorses the Emersonian dream that the poets, Whitman and Henry James among them, yet may prove to be our liberating gods.

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From Gobineau to Hitler

TOWARD THE FINAL SOLUTION: A HISTORY OF EUROPEAN RACISM. By GEORGE L. MOSSE. *Howard Fertig. 277 pp. $17.50.*

Reviewed by LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ

With this, his latest book, George L. Mosse claims once again his place in modern historiography as the foremost explicator and demythologizer of ideas which have inflamed and energized men's minds and worked irreversible evil in human history. In *The Crisis of German Ideology* (1964), Mosse examined the intellectual origins of National Socialist Germany, concentrating on the strains of thought which composed *Volkism*, that unique German blend of romanticism, mysticism, and rabid nationalism on which Nazism fed and thrived. In *The Nationalization of the Masses* (1975), Mosse explored the transformations of religious myths and symbols into the cultic rites of modern mass movements, analyzing how these rites effectively mobilized people into the service and the worship of nationalism.

In his new book, *Toward the Final Solution*, Mosse continues to pursue the themes that have preoccupied him in the past: the role of ideas, myths, and symbols in shaping a secular national ethos; the determinative interplay of culture and politics; the presence and durability of the irrational in political life; and finally, the accommoda-

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tions which political institutions have provided for embodying those savage and irrational ideologies in public policy. As in his previous books, Germany is at the center of his canvas, but his range extends over all of Europe.

European racism, Mosse holds, originated in 18th-century intellectual currents and culminated in World War II in the Nazi "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem." This is not to say that Mosse slights those racist ideas whose chief burden has been skin color, but for the purposes of this book he does choose to bypass earlier manifestations of racial thinking which were launched on the Iberian peninsula, arguing that these did not constitute a viable precedent for strictly European racism. On this point, a contrasting view, undertaken from the perspective of racism in America, may be found in Ronald Sanders's *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands* (which I reviewed in COMMENTARY, August 1978).

The main 18th-century sources of racial thinking identified by Mosse are, on the one hand, the new science of the Enlightenment, which spread among the educated elite, and, on the other hand, the revival of pietism and evangelism among the masses. The scientific foundation for ideas about race was established, according to Mosse, by the confluence of two disparate enthusiasms of the Enlightenment. One was the development of techniques of inquiry and of empirical criteria for establishing the validity and objectivity of scientific findings. The other derived from the Enlightenment's passion for ancient Greece and for aesthetic ideals acquired from classical art, in particular Greek sculpture. Height, fairness, symmetry were the standards by which one measured the outward man, and came to be regarded also as indicators of inner character.

By the end of the 18th century, science and aesthetics had combined to produce "scientific" efforts to divine temperament, character, and even level of culture by reading skulls (phrenology) and by studying the composition of facial features (physiognomy). Soon the size and shape of the nose, the height of the forehead, and the so-called "facial angle" supplemented the factors of height, skin pigmentation, and complexion in the rudimentary racial studies of proto-anthropologists. And it was not long before the scientific study of differences among the races began to shift focus and began to make distinctions not only in terms of external physical characteristics but also with regard to supposed mental endowments and moral qualities.

MEANWHILE, the currents of modernity released by the Enlightenment and the French revolution were producing a counterreaction among all classes and societies of Western and Central Europe. The moorings of the familiar were being swept away by modernity, and to shore up their emotional defenses, people turned to new forms of old faiths—evangelism and pietism. These movements of religious revival stressed the needs of the "inner man" and responded, as Mosse puts it, to "a longing for coherence, for community, and for an ideal in the face of a changing world." In the disunited German lands which had endured French domination, the religious emotions cultivated by pietism were directed toward the idea of a spiritualized national fatherland to which man's "racial soul" responded. Even the philosophers contributed to the concept of soul as the inner, ineffable essence bespeaking the external measurable frame. Hegel held the soul to be a natural entity in the physical world, expressing itself and acting through the body, and the key element distinguishing one race from another.

Early in the 19th century, the scientific search for racial origins turned to the subject of language —and this, just at the time when nationalist feeling was rising throughout Europe. A nation's consciousness, it came to be held, was compounded of a sense of shared community, history, and language, whose origins were buried in the

"In my view, this will be one of the notable books of sociology in the second half of the present century."
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womb of time. Thus it was that the pursuit of linguistic origins happened to coalesce with the emergence of nationalism, and the result was one of the minor melancholy ironies of history, with the philologists making a lasting contribution not just to cultural history but to racism in its ugliest and most irrational incarnation.

Hypotheses abounded at the time that the basic root of all Western languages was Sanskrit, which had been imported into Europe by the migration of "Aryans," that is, people who spoke a prototype of one or more Indo-European languages or who belonged to an ancestral ethnic group which had spoken such a language. In the prevailing romantic cult glorifying India and the Near East, which had by then superseded the Enlightenment cult of classicism, people of presumed Aryan ancestry came to be regarded as nobler than those of other—most particularly, Semitic—origins. By the mid-19th century, French and German scholars (by our standards today we might call them pseudo-scholars) were emphasizing not just differences among peoples and races, but the superiority of some races over others. And language had become a criterion for establishing such distinctions. Mosse cites a work, published in 1816, which claimed that the presumed inability of Jews to speak proper German proved not only their alienness but their inferiority as well. The scientific study of race was being displaced by the bigotry of racism.

Racism emerged as a full-fledged philosophic system with the work of Arthur de Gobineau, a French writer and sometime diplomat. His *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*—not an essay at all, but a four-volume work—first published in Paris in 1853-55, was to establish him as the father of racist ideology. This work, which found a greater reception in Germany than in his native country, eventually became the sacred text of racists, transmitted from generation to generation and disseminated throughout the subculture of German anti-Semitism until it penetrated the mind of Adolf Hitler.

Gobineau believed that race was the key to the rise and fall of civilizations. The white race, the "Aryans," embodied the superior qualities which the black and yellow races lacked. Yet even superior societies perished when they degenerated, and such degeneration, Gobineau asserted, came about through the fusion of races. With this grotesque notion, he set racism on the course toward the Final Solution, for the logical consequence of Gobineau's views on racial degeneration was a belief in the need to destroy the deadly carriers of racial inferiority. Gobineau himself was, to be sure, no anti-Semite; but all his life he held that "Teutonic blood" and "Germanic vitality" constituted the noblest elements of the "Aryans." And the "Aryans" interpreted his sacred text as authority for the destruction of the Jewish people.

WITH his analysis of Gobineau and Gobineau's immediate disciples, Mosse concludes the first part of his book. In his exposition of the etiology of racism and its dynamic, if aberrant, progression, Mosse has produced a strikingly original work whose conceptual brilliance and analytic keenness will surely make it the indispensable work on European racism. The rest of the book is less innovative, if only because in it Mosse retraces much of the same ground he covered in *The Crisis of German Ideology*.

Apart from a chapter on racism and the eugenics movement which developed in England under the influence of Darwinian ideas, and an extended discussion of racist ideas in France, Mosse concentrates here on the penetration of racist ideas into Germany and Austria, particularly among those already infected with older and more traditional forms of anti-Semitism. He discusses anti-Semitic thinkers and writers like Julius Langbehn, Paul de Lagarde, Richard Wagner, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain; mystics and crackpots like Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels; and a variety of ideologues and politicians from Adolf Stoecker, the Berlin pastor who first introduced the issue of anti-Semitism in an election campaign, down to Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna during Hitler's down-and-out days there, and Adolph Schönerer, leader of the pan-Germans in Austria, from all of whom Hitler absorbed his ideas and political lessons.

The last part of Mosse's book, "The Execution"—least satisfactory because most perfunctory—carries the history of racist ideas from World War I to World War II. One chapter deals somewhat skimpily with racism in countries as diverse as Spain (without Jews) and Poland (with 3.3 million Jews), while his penultimate chapter treats the consummation of racist ideology—the murder of six million European Jews.

RACISM, MOSSE concludes, was a "scavenger ideology," which appropriated for its own ends the middle-class virtues of the age (cleanliness, honesty, moral earnestness, hard work), claiming them as the inherent endowments of a superior race. Racists supposed that their conclusions were derived from the objective findings of science, yet their ideas—from Gobineau to Hitler—were scavenged not from the expanding body of scientific knowledge but from the scrap heap of discarded hypotheses, time-worn superstitions, and irrational fanaticism. Mosse's book has the great merit of taking these pseudo-ideas seriously, not because they have any intrinsic worth (they do not) but because for generations they succeeded in capturing men's minds and insinuating their influence into political institutions, even governments.

Racism and its concomitant, anti-Semitism, flourished, and continue to flourish, not for reasons of compelling persuasiveness or moral authority, but because they have satisfied irrational, even pathological, fears and anxieties in individuals and entire peoples and nations. This, indeed, may explain why few historians have been attracted to the study of such ideas—a circumstance which only increases our indebtedness to Mosse for his signal contribution to our historical understanding.

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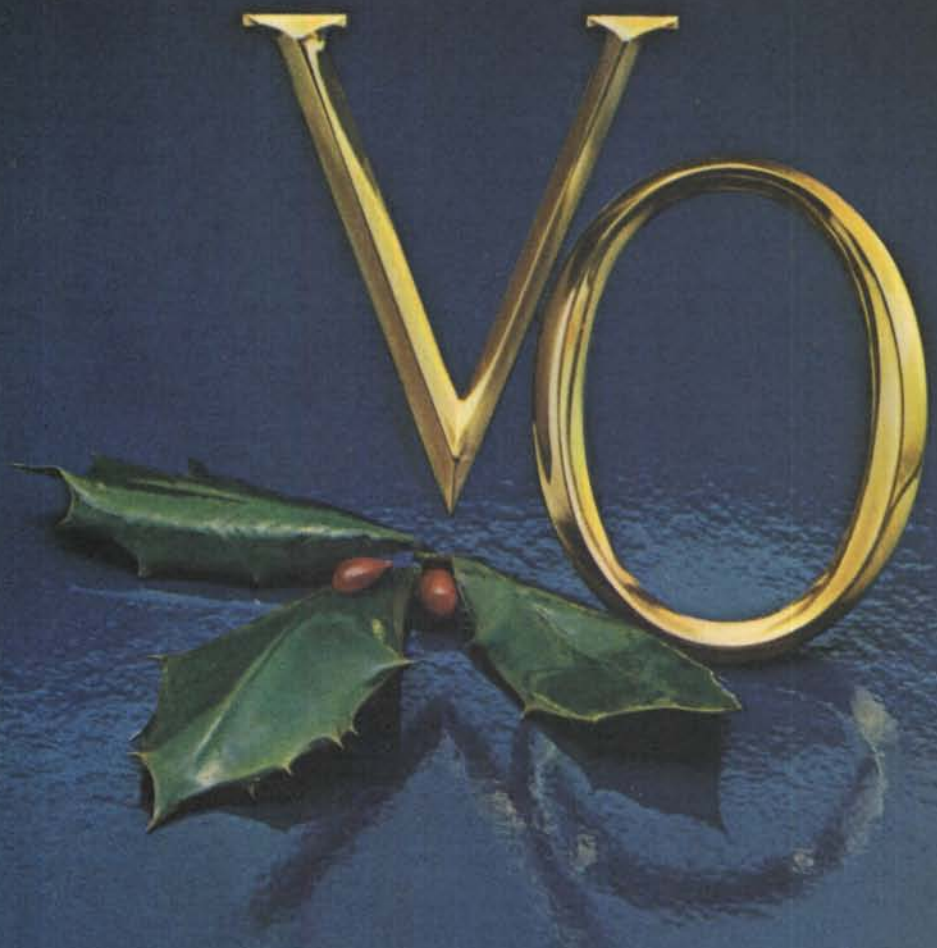

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